Hinduism and India

Govinda Das

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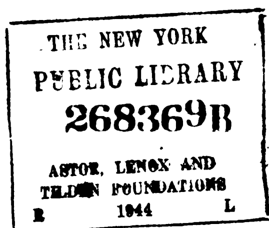
A Retrospect and a Prospect

by

GOVINDA DAS

1908

LONDON and BENARES
THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY.



PRINTED BY THAKUR DAS, MANAGER,

THE TARA PRINTING WORKS, BENARES



The Children of the Great Mother.

May we realise that only by overcoming the prejudices of creed and cult, colour and race, sex and caste, can we hope to become a united people. As are the organs of the human body, each with its separate function, but all guided by the Central Will to benefit the whole, so may we be — ever ready at the Will of the Supreme, for utmost sacrifice in the sacred service of the Motherland.

They are slaves who fear to speak,
For the fallen and the weak:
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think:
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

LOWELL.

PREFACE.

THE present is a critical moment in the history of India. On our answer to the many insistent questions now being raised depends our future. The present offers one of those rare opportunities in the life of a Nation when by a right choice it can immeasurably hasten its evolution on the path of progress and enlightenment, or retard it woefully by a wrong choice. Happily, forces are at work, which are re-energising the many and various races of this vast country for its good. A sense of national feeling and of national dignity is slowly arising, and if this is to find expression in any thing more than mere vague philosophic truisms for the platform, we must awaken to a realization of real, earnest, active duty, and unhesitatingly fling aside the stifling incubus

of ages. Thus alone will it be possible for these new aspirations to develope into actualities from their nebulous state as indistinct yearnings and pious opinions. In the following pages an attempt has been made to point out the places where grit has accumulated in the old machinery of Hindu Society and the means whereby it may be removed.

There is considerable diversity of opinion among people as to how far the naked truth about the condition of things in the country is to be given out. I for one am not for hiding anything from the knowledge of those most concerned; and I would beg those of my readers, who think it censurable that I should have brought out facts and situations of our Hindu life which are gladly ignored in public, and drawn away the thin covering from the gaping wounds, to remember that this has been done because of my firm belief in the certainty of healing them if only the true state

of affairs was realised. It was also necessary to remove the well-founded reproach that the defenders of Hindu-ism were generally under the influence of a narrow-hearted prejudice, palliat-ing, dissumilating, nay, even deny-ing facts which appear unfavorable to their cause; and that while they were alert to detect the "hole small as a mustard seed in their brother's eye they seeing saw not the hole big as a bael fruit in themselves." Further, such a course is neither possible nor wise, and if in the process other than friends also learn the truth as to the true condition of things where is the harm? The real shame is that there should be such skeletons necessitating concealment in the cupboard. Let us throw them out and purify the place, and not preserve them in the secrecy of our darkened chambers. We must also learn to guard against the benumb-ing prestige of great names, and not

shrink from exercising our own independent judgment, or be afraid of disagreement as if it were a mortal sin. We must not trust without testing. People do not realise the overwhelming part emotion plays in the formation of opinions and beliefs and how by a mere process of incessant repetition more than doubtful propositions come to be regarded as infallible truths, to question which shows the traitor's spirit richly deserving of a traitor's fate.

We must also beware of the pernicious standard of judgment that has been set up and which is voiced even by Tulsidas, who is generally a very sane guide, but in this instance was grievously misled by the fervour of his Bhakti—समरथ को नहिं दोष गोसाईं—which is but a faint echo of the vigorous words of the Bhâgavata—तेजीयसां नदाषाये वह्नेः सर्वभुजोयथा—Such a double standard of moral judgment, a far more than a merely lax one for the great and the powerful, and a stringent one for

ordinary humanity is a most flagrant debasement of all true morality. Moral turpitude has to be unflinchingly stigmatised as such, where-ever and whenever met with.

It may be felt by some readers that while the defects in our religio-social organism have been dwelt upon largely, no counter-balancing recognition of the great and good things in it is shown. It would be a fatal mistake to pour in salves when the surgeon's sharp knife is the only remedy for the cancerous growths of many centuries. The defects dwelt upon have not been so dealt with for the mere pleasure of exhibiting the sores for the delectation of unsympathetic outsiders, but for the grave and solemn purpose of opening the eyes of my Hindu brothers that there may be no excuse left for them to be supine —unheedful of the terrible times ahead, if they fail to bestir themselves aright. That the organism has become diseased

to the very core is a fact admitted by all Hindus, irrespective of their special creed or caste. The nauseating bolus has to be swallowed to purge it of its poisonous humours ; the gangrened limb has to be amputated if the life of the patient is to be saved. It is a criminal and short-sighted love which shuts its eyes to this terrible condition and tries to conserve everything as it is.

I desire to point out that the work has been written under a very great sense of responsibility, and has caused much searching of heart, in the fear lest a mistake might have been made and a healthy condition taken for a pathological one. All possible chances of error have been eliminated as far as it lay in the writer's power to do so ; defects have been pointed out and remedies proposed in the utmost spirit of reverence possible when dealing with such a religio-social organism as ours, hoary with untold age.

A few of my friends have taken serious objection to this book as being not "coherent" and farther "wholly destructive." It is neither. The underlying idea, which has never once been lost sight of, has been the great principle that whatever makes for unification, for sympathy, for enlightenment, for toleration, for freedem is to be encouraged: and all that makes against these, is in fact separative, destructive, productive of hatred and strife, curtails liberty, encourages superstition and credulity is to be discouraged. Naturally in doing this it has been my misfortune to run counter to many a prejudice sanctified by time, and upheld by the all-pervasive pressure of numerous Hierarchies possessing practically unlimited power and working through the terribly all-potent caste-organisations, and to point out their real character and condemn them in no uncertain tones. The fact that the Hindu Polity is based on an oli-

garchy buttressed by slavery is conveniently kept in the background. Only by a through realisation of this hard fact is there any chance of removing the many grievances of the vast mass of Hindus, who have so long been kept under a spiritual, social and economical serfage heart-breaking to contemplate. The pointing out of the arbitrary limitations which have brought us to our present woeful state can scarcely be labelled as distructive. The work is really constructive, for it suggests ways by which all such nefarious influences might be overcome and emancipation of the individual secured.

It may be urged by the orthodox that I have not given always their explanations of old rites and ceremonials, but such which may be sometimes strange to them. My answer is that there is no such thing as a well-defined and universally accepted orthodox position with regard to these matters. Hindu religious

practices have existed for so long a stretch of time and over so vast an area that one is lost in a maze when attempting the quixotic feat of fixing what is orthodoxy and what is not. The fluid nature of the polity makes such an undertaking impossible. The only possible way then left, and I must say the only right way, was to deal with the questions in a critical and historical spirit. All the modern revivalist movements have unfortunately done very little to encourage this spirit of a critical and historical enquiry in matters of faith and of practice; but on the contrary have stimulated the morbid love of the Hindu for the supernatural which has been sapping the vigour of his intellect and especially character for so many thousands of years. No encouragement has been given to the historical study of the current religio-social ideas and practices and of the agreement or otherwise of these ideas with each other,

and finally to the rigid sifting of all oral or manuscript traditions and the additions, substractions and alterations which have been made either deliberately or through imperfect preservation through the long ages of their existence. But on the contrary they have all mostly devoted themselves to a mythico-allegorical and mystical method of explaining all religious beliefs and practices. This method—or, to be accurate, want of method—may succeed in providing explanations of some few isolated ceremonies, institutions and customs; but lamentably fails when attempts are made to apply it to them as a *whole* or even to parts *consistently*. If for none other than the very simple cause, that the writings to be interpreted have not been preserved in their pristine purity but are a tangled skein of many threads. Glossators who follow this method of explaining, or rather explaining away, see harmonies in the facts and ideas of

the various writers where none exist, and regard as true and valid the facts and arguments of writers believed to be inspired, and insist on reading back into these old texts meanings which are the product of the modern development of Hindu thought. Gough, in his Philosophy of the Upanishads, was the first to sound this note of warning against such a trifling with the principles of historical and textual criticism, but the advice fell on unheeding ears. It is only by an earnest *comparative* study of social institutions and religious systems that a sanity of view is possible on these subjects which are ordinarily only perceived through the thick fog of intolerance and bigotry.

The suggestions here thrown out are merely tentative; they are meant primarily to rouse the people and help them to diagnose the case and apply the necessary remedies; they are not to be taken as the dogmatic *obiter dicta*

of an empiric to be followed implicitly with blind, unreasoning faith—of which, alas! poor India has ever had a plethora—but only as helps, as counsels, towards an ultimate solution of the problem.

Some readers more philosophically inclined might object that never since the world began nor even in the distant future will it be possible for masses of men to live without unreasoned faith and ceremonial rituals and that I have attempted to demolish too much. In reply I may state that I have not attempted anything so wild, and if for what I have actually attempted justification were wanted I might cite great instances beginning with Kṛishṇa and the Bhagavaṭgîṭâ on through Buḍḍha and the Piṭakas and not ending with Ḍayânanda Saraswatî and his Saṭyârtha-prakâsha. Not a single one of these movements has ever been fully and completely successful,

or can ever be. So there is nothing to fear on that score. It is only through very hard knocks and great persistence that some little progress can be made. The tremendous force of inertia, misnamed conservatism, is something enormous, and is not to be swept away by even many strokes.

Vast collective causes have brought about the present state of things and only by vast collective causes can they be changed. What can however be rationally required and is required, of the congeries of races and faiths inhabiting India, is not a preliminary and absolute but only a gradual and progressive giving up of prejudices. My hope however is that this effort of mine might prove to be the trickling tiny stream at G a n g o ṭ r î of mother G a n g a, which is to become later a mighty rushing flood, sweeping away all barriers before its irresistible onrush, and leaving behind the fertilising influences which nourish the whole

watershed. It is not by isolated efforts that this is possible; the movement must proceed from the masses, if a radical and permanent improvement is to be made. They have to be reached, but so far no organised and persistent efforts have been made to rouse them from their almost brutal ignorance and lethargy. The Puranic preachers and the innumerable sectarian Sâdhus, Bairâgis etc. are mostly reactionaries of a bad type, catering to the passions and prejudices of the mob for the purposes of exploiting them. Still worse offenders are the majority of the various vernacular Newspapers, and even some English ones, who though knowing better, alas! do not act up to what is true and right. One really hopeful sign which may save the situation is the steady unrelenting pressure from the outside—adapt or perish are the only two alternatives allowed. The English domination of the country has forced us into contact with modern civilisation which is moulding

us on cosmopolitan lines much to our good. For however pledged to religious neutrality the British Government may be it is by its very genius and the force of circumstances prevented from truckliing to ignorance and superstition. Therefore notwithstanding its many well-meant efforts it cannot capture the hearts of the people until those hearts themselves have been changed by widespread education. This is causing great resentment and a vast inchoate dread, but the result of this, many of us fondly believe, will be the fusing of the whole under the heat generated of dread and resentment and the hammer strokes of the environment. For my part I am not at all perturbed at the fire of the catastrophes which has been melting down these hundreds of years the old-world polity and attempting, though rather blindly, to produce a new one. A new order of things for India is willed by Providence. We must recognise the true nature of

our malady, which is merely the distemper caused by this stage of transition. It is neither possible nor would it be wise, if it were possible, to kick against our present environment; but to recognise it whole-heartedly as a beneficient regenerating process and thus save ourselves much useless anguish.

The unrest in the country of which we hear so much in these days is not merely political; it is equally economic, social, religious and moral. It is due not to temporary or trumpery causes but to this deep-seated reason, that people are becoming once more alive and throbbing with new sensations, and groping their way from darkness into light. In their blindness they cannot distinguish friend from foe, right from wrong. But a day is soon approaching when there will be light, and the brooding monsters of darkness laid low.

What better place then for such a work as this, than Kâshi, the radiating

centre of Hinduism from generation to generation for these thousands of years, where Buḍḍha preached his first sermon two thousand five hundred years ago where again two thousand years later and under far different conditions the saintly Kabîr preached amity and brotherliness between Hindu and Musalman. Where he preached the way to salvation, like his great predecessor, through wisdom and lowly charity, and fearlessly denounced caste-hierarchies and rituals whether Islamic or Vedic, and stooped not to delude ignorance still farther by the invention of 'esoteric' interpretations of stories coming down from days of which no trustworthy and unmistakable records are available. Whence to-day emanate all the vyavasthâs, pronouncements for the guidance of the religio-social life of this great but slumbering people. Who can then point out better than the watcher in the crow's nest, the rocks

and shoals ahead or direct the steersman to point the vessel's prow to safer channels? There are wiser and greater men there but they have gone to sleep, but if this 'splash' wakes them from their sleep of Muchukuṇḍa,—the Hindu Rip Van Winkle—the work will have been done and the progress of the country and the Nation assured. Mistakes there may be, but they affect not the main trend of the work, which is to rouse the slumberers to the rapidly approaching danger, and not to appeal to the mere scholar and the antiquary.

To some this attempt of mine to lead into new paths and to modify our institutions hoary with age, might savour of impertinence; while to others it might look to be an absurd, utopian, midsummer madness to believe that such far-reaching or any, changes, in fact, are possible for this leviathan Hindu society, saturated with the inertia of ages and proud of a past that is no more; sulking like a

fractious child because it cannot possess the Moon. The miracle-monger and the guide-to-Heaven are ever with us, whether in the time-honored garb of Sâdhus or in the modern one of Theosophical or other spiritualistic teachers. There is no evil for which they cannot provide a panacea or a desire which they cannot satisfy by the power of their manṭras and charms. No journey, whether it be to the sensuous heaven of the Gods, or towards the blank of Mukṭi is beyond their powers. The masses are steeped in superstition and even the higher classes are not free from it. All sorts of crude views are being promulgated from numerous platforms. But though it may not be possible to secure a hearing for a rational, philosophic religion for the time being, the attempt must not be given up because the forces of obscurantism are so overwhelming. Some time, some day, the people will awaken and gladly welcome the light

against which they had, in their pitiful ignorance, so long and so obstinately shut their eyes. Quackery and knavery have a life tougher than that of Râvaṇa and of Raktavîrya, and they take much killing. The pathetic gullibility of untaught, and even taught, Hindu nature is heartbreaking. It ever offers a most tempting prize to all such to exploit it to the utmost for their own selfish ends. Not till people realise that there are no royal roads and short cuts to 'liberation' and 'paradise' will they be able to shake off the nefarious influence of vendors of patent nostrums and owners of 'way-charts.' The innumerable Mathas, Akhârâs, temples with hosts of Gurus, is a standing evidence of the unquenchable demand of the people for 'other-world' lore, which these dole out for hard cash, when not something much worse; witness the celebrated trial some years ago in the High Court of Bombay and known

as the Maharaja case, in which some of the heads of the Vallabhâchârya sect figured so prominently and so disastrously. The many modern Societies, and Samâjas, started for similar purposes, whether run on oriental or occidental lines meet exactly the same want, the seeming difference being due to a thin coating of English education and a light-hearted use of ill-understood scientific phrases. Fearful is the ignorance of the people which has caused this demand, and woeful the debauched intellect of the purveyors to this unhealthy demand, sapping as it does the national life of the country, and causing wholesale demoralization.

A word may be necessary here as to the form the work has taken and its genesis. On some of the members of the Board of Trustees objecting rather strongly to the Sanâtana Ḍharma Catechism it was agreed that a Committee be appointed for the revision of the

series and to lay its suggestions before the Board, but as neither a convener was appointed nor a time-limit fixed the Committee has never yet met; and it is not unlikely that the series will gradually petrify into a 'new theology'. A wish had however in the meantime been expressed for an intermediate work between the Advanced and Elementary Text-books of Hinduism which would at the same time serve as a Catechism to both. It was thought that the revised draft of the S. D. Catechism which I had prepared might serve as a basis for such a work; but though it was written in the spirit of compromise with conservatism and orthodoxy which inspired the text-books, it did not conform, as Mrs. Besant thought, with the tenets of those books, which do not, and in fact are not meant to represent Sanâtana Ḍharma in its accurate historical phase, but are in truth a hotch-potch of practices from varying climes and varying times. There is

another serious defect also in them, which is that their underlying philosophic principle is the Advaita of Shankara and its modifications by his professed followers. So far therefore they are also sectarian. Besides this the attempts in it to "explain" and "justify" Hindu dogmas and rituals in the light of Theosophical teachings is repudiated by orthodoxy who will not tolerate such tamperings with their old-world methods of justification, afraid of being inextricably landed in a bog through this help of "occult lore" and pseudo-science.

Thus though my work was never submitted to the Board, I was encourageed by Mrs. Besant to publish it under my own name, and as a preliminary measure was published in the widely circulated *Central Hindu College Magazine* under the title 'A Hindu Catechism.' I have under these circumstances added the fourth part and revised and enlarged

the rest in consonance with what I regard as an impartial investigation and critical enquiry into the various periods of our religion. But it is possible, even probable, that I have not always succeeded in eliminating its earlier flavour, some of which may still he sticking. I have refrained from giving quotations and citing authorities for every statement I make, for the simple reason that the book is not meant for the use of mere scholars, delvers in things antiquarian, but for the practical purpose of appealing to large classes of man. Citations would have unnecessarily added to the bulk of the book. The work is a compilation, and "learned lumber" would have defeated its purpose by driving away the average reader; authorities are therefore seldom given and quotations not always marked. The work is a blend of the past and the present practices of Hinduism and an attempt has been made to indicate the future lines on which it might

be remodelled to bring it into effective harmony with the newer conditions of things. This part of the work could not have been properly understood without a setting out of the tenets and practices and thus providing the necessary historical setting. With the administrative aspects of the problem which the British occupation of the country has brought about I have not dealt here, as they affect not only us Hindus, but also Musalmans, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhist and diverse other religionists besides. I hope to treat that aspect of the question in a separate book.

Now remains the pleasant duty of acknowledging the help I have received in the working up of this small volume. Assistance has been received from many friends, but the two whose help has been most valuable and but for which the work would have been far more imperfect than it is now, are Mr. Ganganath Jha, M. A. Professor of Samskrita,

Muir College, Allahabad and Mr. P. T. Srinivas Iyengar, M. A., Principal, Narsing Row College, Vizagapatam. My special gratitude is due to them for ungrudging help extended over many years and for valuable suggestions and criticisms which have removed many shortcomings. I shall utilise this opportunity also for publicly acknowledging the debt I am under to Mrs. Annie Besant; for though my general obligations to her during these last fifteen years that I have been honored by her friendship are too many and too personal to be specified here I cannot refrain from expressing my thankfulness to her for this special one which has resulted in this book. With these few forewords I take leave of this book, which has been occupying my thoughts for the last five years, hoping that it will awaken thought among the slumbering millions of India.

BENARES. GOVINDA DÂS.
September 1908.

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1	5	न चाऽपि	न चापि
	6	स्मजन्ते	सृजन्ते
4	10	The Veda	the Veda
5	24	'Brahma'	'Brâhma'
8	5	the hoṭâ, the	the hoṭâ or the
	6	as the	or the
	6	which	while
	8	these three and	these three,—and
	11	mind peoples	minds of people
	14	performance,	performance,—
9	17	Sâma latter have	Sâma have
12	5	Hoṭâr	Hoṭâ
	16	lotus	later
13	20	indecent—that	indecent that
16	2	now, impossible	now impossible
	2	guess at	guess, as
	7	bit	list
	10	are quoted	are, in addition to the above, quoted
	16	under	Under
	24	each other	one another
35	23	will	well
46	2	begots	bigots
53	24	image	images
60	21	last	Last

Page.	Line.	For	Read.
61	23	Univere	Universe
63	23	Samviṭa	Samviṭ
75	13	year	years
97	9	his	their
101	14	have theological writers tried	theological writers have tried
111	10	words	worlds
115	1	days. Desire	days; desire
127	16	has	—has
159	23	has	as has
175	12	Prohiṭa	Purohita
176	19	lives	life's
186	25	a necessary	necessary
215	7	it is those	It is the
231	26	evil would	evil they would
235	14	there	their
238	6	idleness	idleness and
268	4	the fittest	can the fittest
271	10	differents	different
276	25	, brings	, he brings
281	21	that: "In	: "In
303	14	absorbed	observed



PART I.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF HINDUISM.

युक्तियुक्तमुपादेयं वचनं बालकादपि ।
अन्यत्तृणमिव त्याज्यमप्युक्तं पद्मजन्मना ॥

योगवाशिष्ठ ।

पुराणमित्येव न साधु सर्वं
न चापि काव्यं नवमित्यवद्यम् ।
सन्तः परीक्ष्यान्यतरत्भजन्ते
मूढः परप्रत्ययनेयबुद्धिः ॥

कालिदास ।

Q. 1. What is our Ḍharma?

A. 1. It is popularly known as Hinḍuism, and is also spoken of as Sanâṭana Ḍharma. Many other names are also given to it, for instance Vaiḍika Ḍharma, Ârya Maṭa, Ârṣha Ḍharma, Varṇâshrama Ḍharma, Shâshvaṭa Ḍharma, Brâhmanism, etc., but the name 'Hinḍuism' is the most comprehensive and the most widely current, all others are defective; in as much as they are applicable only

to definite periods in the growth of the religion, the *whole* range of which they fail to cover.

Q. 2. Is it correct to translate Ḍ h a r m a by 'Religion'?

A. 2. No; for the word 'Religion' represents a western conception, conveying the idea of a set of opinions with regard to an extra-cosmic God and his relations with man—historical and moral,—which a number of people have in common; and this is equivalent to 'M a ṭ a'; while the word 'Ḍ h a r m a' means the sane response of man to the universal unchanging Laws of Nature. M a ṭ a is the opinion of a particular community, and is therefore of much more restricted import than Ḍ h a r m a. The Laws of Ḍ h a r m a being based on Nature are, for that reason, absolutely binding in their character, while the practices enjoined by M a ṭ a or Religion are only relatively so, being limited in their scope, and applying only to particular times and places.

In the beginnings of Society, everything bearing on human life, individually or in

its corporate character, is brought under the sphere of Ḍharma; and it is only through increasing civilisation leading to complexity and a differentiation of functions that the idea of Ḍharma begins to be clarified. But long before this stage is reached, interested priesthoods have arisen, multiplying rituals and pushing into prominence the selfish and ceremonial side of religion; when society grows sick of the dead forms, no more inspired by living truth, it rebels and breaks through these forms, to reach to the true idea of Ḍharma. When this stage is reached, a whole cycle of evolution has been left behind with its warring creeds and ceremonials, and the life of the individual lived again wholly for Ḍharma but on a very much higher plane.

Q. 3. How has the name Hinḍuism become so common?

A. 3. The word 'Hinḍuism' takes no note of the various minor differences among us, caused by racial, tribal, social and sectarian customs and habits, and so helps to weld us into a united people, by supplying the requisite single and popular name round

which patriotism can crystallise. And farther, as pointed out above, it is this name alone that is applicable to all the phases through which the religion has passed. Hence this all-embracing name, once used, has caught the fancy of the people and become popular.

Q. 4. What is the foundation of Hinḍuism?

A. 4. This is popularly asserted to be The Veda—which literally means knowledge, science; though Hinduism, as it has been for a long time, has wandered very far from it. Under this name the ancients collected all the wisdom of their day. Out of the scattered remnants of this collection of primal lore, the Ṛishi Vyâsa is said to have built up the four Veḍas as we now know them: the Ṛig, the Yajuḥ, the Sâma and the Aṭharva. These were later again split up into various Shâkhâs, or schools, most of which have been lost again, differing a little from each other, under different teachers, owing chiefly to an incomplete preservation of the ancient traditions.

The Ṛigveḍa contains only ṛiks or

verses. The Yajurveda contains y a j û n ṣ h i prose formulas relating to sacrificial performances and ṛ i k s, a fourth of which latter are identical with those found in the Ṛigveḍa. The Sâmaveḍa consists almost entirely of ṛ i k s taken from the Ṛigveḍa, for the purpose of being chanted. One half of the Aṭharvaveḍa contains poetical and prose incantations for the cure of evils, physical and moral, for the producing of evils to enemies, and for the securing of worldly objects like wealth and women; the other half is a selection of ṛ i k s from the Ṛigveḍa. In a sacrifice, the officer called 'H o t â' recited the Ṛigveḍa, which, for that reason, came to be known as the 'H a u ṭ r a' Veda; the A ḍ h v a r y û recited the Yajurveḍa, hence also called the 'Â d h-v a r y a v a' Veda; the Uḍgâṭâ the Sâmaveda, hence also called the 'A u ḍ g â ṭ r a' Veda and the Bráhmâ, an officer added later on, claimed the Atharvaveda as his own though it had nothing to do with his duties, and it thenceforth came to be known as the 'B r â h m a' Veda; the B r a h m â recited nothing during the sacrifice, being a sort of presiding officer watching over the due per-

formance of the complicated ritual. Another reason for this name of the Aṭharvaveda lies in the fact that a large number of Upanishaḍs dealing with Brahmaviḍyâ—mostly of later production—were attached to this Veḍa, because of its being a sort of no man's land the process was easy.

Each of these ' Veḍas ' is divided into four parts:—(1) Samhiṭâ, (2) Brâhmaṇa, (3) Âraṇyaka and (4) Upanishaḍ

It is generally asserted that the Ṛigveḍa is the oldest of the Veḍas. But there are certain portions of the Yajurveḍa whose language appears to be older than the oldest parts of the Ṛigveḍa and further there is also a tradition among the Yajurveḍîs that their Veḍa is older than the Rigveḍa In places, the Veḍas are disfigured by grossly obscene passages dealing with rites and ceremonies, to read of which even produces disgust in our minds. In glaring contrast stand out the sacred books of the Chinese, "so completely exempt from licentious descriptions, and from every offensive expression."

It may be useful here to point out the true place and nature of the Aṭharvaveḍa, which is often missed even by European scholars unable to shake off the influence of the Hindu prejudice against it and check and correct by reference to ascertainable facts. This Veḍa represents the ordinary life of the community, full of desires, illnesses and disappointments, loves and hates, which it was meant to cure and satisfy by means of charms and incantations, rituals and herbs. Naturally all this was "occult lore" par excellence and not to be divulged to any body. The naturally secretive Hindu would never confess that he was a pastmaster of the art of witch-craft, nor could he be brought to confess that he realised his hopes and aims through this aid. This will account for much of the silence with regard to this Veḍa. Later when ethical and philosophical teachings had changed the public standpoint somewhat, the feeling of a little shame in resorting to such measures would creep in and would give rise to hypocrisy. He would take advantage of the practices but would repudiate them publicly. The word Trayee viḍyâ, three knowledge,

of which so much has been sought to be made is easily accountable. In those early days when sacrifices were the main feature of the religion of the Vedic Hindu, this fourth Veda was no use either to the h o ṭ â, the u ḍ g â t â as the a ḍ h v a r y û, which each of the other three Vedas were appropriated to the uses of these three and naturally had no place in the T r a y e e V i d y â. In a later age when the word ṭ r a y e e had become current and firmly fixed in the mind peoples, and this veda was appropriated by the Brahmâ—who was only a "watcher of the sacrifice" having nothing to do with its actual performance, it was too late to change the "three" into "four."

The language of the Aṭharva hymns and the ideas and beliefs underlying them are absolutely the same as those of the other three Vedas. Witch-craft is as essential a part of those as of this, the very same fetish worship and animism is to be met in them as in this, the constanty dreaded wrath of the avenging spirits has to be mollified, no less there than here. All four sprang from the same broad current of popular superstition and practice which in one case owing wholly to external

reasons became the "higher religion" and its true origin and character conveniently forgotten while in the other no circumstances arose to cast a veil over its traditional character. The real difference between the Aṭharva and the other three V e ḍ a s consists in the fact that the contents of the former are concerned mainly with the domestic acts and the daily life of the people and prescribe simple rituals for carrying them out. It follows that they are far more widespread and pervasive in their action than the pompous contents of the latter .The Purohiṭa of a Chief had to be well versed in its m a ṅ ṭ r a s if he was to guard his king against harm and injure his enemies. The Ṛ i g Y a j u ḥ and S â m a [redacted] have always arrested attention and have been idealised because the ritual with which they deal came to be regarded as something grand and splendid, costing untold treasures, which few could afford. These naturally were made to minister to show and display and hence their meritricious importance. It is only an uncritical and sentimental attitude that would relegate the Aṭharvaveḍa to unmerited ob-

loquy while raising the other three to a high pedestal.

The Âtharvaṇas, the Bhṛigus, the Ângirasas of the Atharvaveḍa are some of the oldest Ṛishis in comparison to whom, Vasishtha, Vishvâmitra, Yâjnyavalkya of the other vedas are parvenus. Even today in modern India these simple sorceries have not been killed out but form a part and parcel of the life of the people from the lowest to the highest, no household is free from them not even of "enlightened" Bengal; and daily things take place with the cognizance of the graduate head of the family but which he would blush to acknowledge. There is nothing to choose from and descriminate between the four Veḍas, if anything the balance would be in favour of the Aṭharva for, like the daily surprises of human life, it contains a far larger mass of the Brahmaviḍya, coupled as it is with petty sorceries, than all the other three put together.

It is only that which makes a big splash in the steady flowing mighty river of life that makes an impression, while the silent onward motion of the waters is unheeded,

so it has been with the amount of attention attracted by the three Veḍas. The big splash of the sacrifice has been noted and cherished while the humble but steady and all pervasive action of the "grihya" ceremonies of the Aṭharva have passed by unnoticed and unacknowledged.

To argue for the lateness of the Aṭharvaveḍa because the other Veḍas do not mention it is as reasonable as to uphold that the Ṛig and Sâma Veḍas did not exist in the days of Âpastamba because he does not mention them in his Sûtras!

While this has been the fate of the Aṭharvaveḍa at the hands of the Hinḍus and of the foreign Veḍic scholars, a wholly different and equally undeserved fate has overtaken the Ṛigveda. The Hindu tradition that the Yajurveḍa is the oldest has been ignored because of the fancied literary nature of the Ṛig as against the liturgical nature of the former. The Paurâṇic tradition as preserved in the Vishṇu Purâṇa for instance is, that Yajuḥ was the first and single Veḍa which was broken up and rearranged into

four, all the nonsacrificial portions were lumped up together as the Aṭharva and the remaining portion arranged in three sacrificial manuals for the three priests. The duties of the H o ṭ â were comparatively insiginficant and so large pieces of connected ṛiks were thrown together, while the Â d h v a r y u v e ḍ a had naturally to take on a very specialised shape. Notwithstanding its specialised character we see that it was not possible to remove all traces of ideas of the nature of those of which the Aṭharva is so full, here too those ideas occur though sparsely. Even here we see that the first arrangement was not quite satisfactory and that it was left for a ~~latus~~ day to produce the S h u k l a Y a j u h the white, the well-arranged Y a j u h, as against the black, the ill-arranged Yajuh. The creation of m a n ṭ r a s had come to an end when these compilations came into existence and the necessary evidence for determining the mere priority of compilation is hard to produce.

Q. 5. *Please give some account of these.*

A. 5. The Samhiṭâs are collections of

poems, in honour of various Ḍevas and Ḍevîs, and certain prose passages to which the name "Yajush" is given. The original purpose of most of these poems having been lost they were later on utilized for sacrificial ceremonies and called m a n ṭ r a s. The Brâhmaṇas are prose works, aiming at an explanation of the mystical meanings of the different sacrificial acts referred to in the Samhiṭâs, and showing the various advantages accruing from their proper performance. Incidentally, a description of the different sacrifices is also given, and, in connection with them, speculations as to the various interpretations of the m a n ṭ r a s are indulged in, and traditions and stories cited in proof thereof. The Âraṇyakas deal with certain peculiar sacrifices — e. g. the M a h â-v r a ṭa or P a u n d a r î ka sacrifice—which is so grossly indecent—that no modern pen may describe it; though it has been performed even in quite modern times; the B r a h m a-m e d h a &c.,—and in some cases contain cosmogonic speculation which explains creation more or less in terms of sacrificial ritual or sexual reproduction.

The Upanishads deal primarily with the various vidyâs or methods of meditation, and were promulgated with a view to supplying the newly arisen need for some means of getting into touch with the supernatural, in place of the time-honoured but now discredited yajnavidyâ or the bloody sacrifices. These vidyâs insist on the supreme and absolute value to man of getting into touch with the nature of Being by the practice of various meditations, as against the way of sacrifices. Naturally every one of these vidyâs is not of superlative merit; some are good and useful, others frivolous and puerile. The notion that the Upanishads deal only with Brahmavidyâ and with philosophic insight into the problems of Being is of a comparatively modern growth; due chiefly to a misunderstanding of the historical conditions under which the Upanishad literature grew up. The sole reason for the existence of the Upanishads consists in the aforesaid vidyas, and not in sheer hard thinking and intellectual speculations, as the modern student might imagine; and it is only as subsidiary to the

vidyâs that Brahmaviḍya is introduced. The very same old-world unhistorical methods have been freely used in later literature; each rival commentator has, by a free use of the Mîmâṅsâ methods, tortured the texts and made them yeild meanings consonant with his *preconceived* a priori ideas.

A great deal of confusion also exists with regard to the authenticity of the Upanishaḍs. They number more than three hundred. The question as to which are genuine and which are forgeries does not concern us here. They are all genuine or all spurious from the point of view we look at them. For our present purpose it would be enough to attempt to fix the probable times and order of their composition. We may thus classify the Upanishaḍs as (1) occuring in Samhitâs. (2) attached to Brâhmaṇas and Âraṇyakas. (3) believed to be parts of as yet undiscovered Âraṇyakas (4) not belonging to either of the above categories but quoted by Shaṅkara in his Sûtra-bhâshya. (5) quoted by Râmânuja. (6) distinctly sectarian. A few examples will make the above devision clear. (1) The sole example of this class is the Îshâ-vâsya.

When or why it was thrust in where it is, is now impossible to even guess at it has absolutely no connection with the first 39 adhyâyas of the S a m h i t â nor with the S h a ṭ a p a ṭ h a Brâhmaṇa. (2) Aitareya, Taiṭṭiriya Châṅḍogya, Bṛihadâraṇyaka, Kena and Kaushîtaki exhaust this bit, (3) Katha and Maitrâyaṇîya are the only two examples of this kind. (4) Jâbâla Muṅdaka, Maṅḍûkya, Shveṭâshvaṭar and Prashna, are all that are quoted by Shaṅkara, (5) Garbha, Mahânârâyaṇa, Chûlikâ, Mahopanishad and Subâla are to be met with in Râmânuja's b h â s h y a. Their antiquity is doubtful on account of the language, which has lost somewhat the antiquarian flavour of the earliest groups. (6) Under this head come such as Gopâltâpini (vaishnava), Tripurâtapani (Shâkta) Kalagnirudra (Shaiva) Kaivalya (advaita). The style here is distinctly classical and the vast majority of these cannot be safely credited to more than 5 to 600 years. The flavour of antiquity and authority sought to be given to them by interested sectarians is a transparent fraud and none but those having vested interests are imposed upon by their being called Upanishads.

Q. 6. What was the reason for these modifications?

A. 6. The reason lay in the upward progress of the evolution of man. The real test whether any given body of doctrines should continue to be the 'revelation' for any given community is the moral one. So long as injunctions laid down and the illustrative stories put forward are such as are accepted unchallenged, it is all right. But as soon as they begin to be questioned, chiefly on the ground of their ethical lowness, then this is a clear proof of the fact that the race has progressed beyond the traditional body of doctrines, which would henceforward, prove to be more a curse than a blessing.

Q. 7. Which are the most important Brâhmaṇas, Araṇyakas and Upanishaḍs?

A. 7. The Aiṭareya, Ṭaiṭṭirîya, Shaṭapaṭha and Ṭaṅdya, among the Brâhmaṇas; the Aiṭareya, and Ṭaiṭṭirîya among the Âraṇyakas; and Îshạ, Kena, Katha, Prashna, Muṅdaka, Mâṅdûkya, Taiṭṭirîya, Aiṭareya, Chhânḍogya, Bṛihaḍâraṇ-

yaka, Kaushîṭaki, Shveṭâshvaṭara and Maitrâyaṇîya among the Upanishads.

Q. 8. Are there any other works handed down by Rishis?

A. 8. Yes; the Sûṭras, the Smṛiṭis, the Purâṇas, the Âgamas or Ṭanṭras, the Râmâyana, with its sequel the Yoga-vâsishtha, and the Mahâbhâraṭa. with its sequel the Harivamsha.

These are the principal sources from which we gather the teachings of the Hinḍu religion of to-day. But the whole of this literature bears clear traces of having been tampered with, time and often. Their authorship also is very doubtful. For instance, the Smṛiṭi popularly attributed to Manu, is not his work at all; it is said to be the work of Bhṛigu who relates what Manu is said to have taught to the Ṛishis. Similarly all the Purâṇas are attributed to Veḍa-Vyâsa. If all were written by him, they must all be according to tradition over 5000 years old; but from internal evidence, many of these do not appear to be more than a 1000 years

old, if not still later. But all these works bear traces of ancient thought and were revised and edited time after time in accordance with the changing ideals, beliefs and practices of each age. Most of these works were intended for particular districts or sects. But modern India pretends to regard the whole of this mass of literature as authoritative.

Q. 9. What are Sûṭras?

A. 9. Sûṭras, or aphorisms, are condensed statements, like formulae, each collection of these dealing separately with almost everything which interests mankind —religion, science, literature and philosophy.

Q. 10. What are Smṛiṭis?

A. 10. Smṛiṭis are metrical paraphrases, in modern Samskṛiṭ, chiefly of Gṛihya and Ḍharma Sûṭras, adapting these older teachings to later conditions of life. They treat of the laws and customs of the land and people, and lay down rules of life from birth to death, also for the portion of the life between death and rebirth.

Q. 11. What are Purâṇas?

A. 11. Purâṇas are books which, in the form of stories, tell of the evolution and involution, the growth and decay, of worlds, and of the gods, sages and kings, who played a part in them. Besides this, they contain expositions of the various phases of Ḍharma, of science, and of philosophy. They were apparently intended to be encyclopedias containing the whole knowledge needed for particular sects, schools, localities or tribes.

Q. 12. What are Agamas, or Ṭaṅṭras?

A. 12. They are works which, while dealing largely with the methods of getting into touch with superphysical existences in various ways, often contain Paurâṇic and Smṛiṭi matters also. Traces of this Âgama or Ṭâṅṭric form of worship are found in the Veḍas; and their root lies in the far back days of Bhâraṭavarsha, when the Sâṅkhya philosophy, with its theory of Purusha and Prakṛiṭi, had not been absorbed in the Buḍdhist and

Jain and Vedânta reformations, and as it touched one of the deepest springs of human life it has developed in various times and thoroughly permeates modern Hinduism. All Hinḍu ceremonies, not excluding the comparatively old Saṅdhyâ even, are more Tâṅṭric to-day than Veḍic. Even the Buḍḍhist religion has almost succumbed to its influence—witness the worship of Târâ and other female divinities by the Northern Buḍḍhists.

The growth of Âgama has been mainly in two channels—(1) the Vâma or left-hand; also called 'Kaula' and 'Vîra'; and (2) the Dakṣhiṇa or 'Righthand;' also known as Samaya. The former is supposed to be much more effective than the latter, chiefly because the use of intoxicating drinks and sexual aberrations associated with it produces states of nervous breakdown not quite dissimilar to the nervous exaltation of the true mystic, but it is rightly condemned by all upright people.

The Dakshiṇa-mârga, though free from the grossness and beastiality of the Kaulas,

has not escaped the influence of a low view of life: it degrades that which is above value to a thing of the market-place, and barters its birthright for the perishable things of the earth. This reduction of pure worship to that of a religion of sensual materialism was clearly shown when the men of a later age added to the famous hymn to Durgâ,—the Saptashaṭî—a grovelling prayer for the boon of personal beauty, of a beauteous wife, of name and fame, of conquest over enemies. Wherein is the difference between this and the teaching of Chârvâka who, likewise, asks for nothing else, save a well-satisfied physical existence? The true Âgama view is set forth by one of the Shankarâchâryas when he pours his heart out in a hymn of touching pathos:—"O world-mother, hearken unto me, thy most wayward child! I desire not wealth, nor wife, not Mukṭi even; but what I do desire is to serve Thee and Thee only, for the sake of uttermost service alone."

The pure Âgama has degenerated into a magical ceremonialism, sometimes of the

lowest kind,—the poisonous fumes of which have everywhere choked national life,—having been industriously disseminated by a corrupt and selfish priesthood. All this has been far-reaching in its effects, as the source of this form of worship lies in deep-seated wants of human nature. They have to be taken into account in all rational dealing with religions.

Q. 13. Tell me the names of some of the Sûṭras, Smṛiṭis, Purâṇas, and Ṭanṭras.

A. 13. There are a very large number of Sûṭras; but those in most general use are the Vyakaraṇasûṭras of Pâṇini, the Yogasûtras of Paṭañjali, and the sûṭras of Vyâsa. Of Smṛiṭis there are over a hundred; but those most in use are those of: (1) Manu, (2) Nâraḍa, (3) Yâjñyavalkya, and (4) Parâshara; while of Purâṇas and Upa-Purâṇas, we hear of more than fifty, of which five are most popular; (1) Bhâgavaṭa, (2) Devî-Bhâgavaṭa, (3) Shivapurâṇa, (4) Vishṇupurâṇa, and (5) Mârkañdeyapu-

râṇa. Of the Ṭañṭras, the best known are the Yâmalas and the Samhiṭas, the Meru, the Vâmkeshvara the Spañḍapraḍîpikâ and the Lalitâsahasranâma with Bhâskara's bhashya, the Pañchasṭavi and their bhâshyas the Sauñdaryalahiri with Lakshmiḍhara bhâshya; Agastya sûtras.

Q. 14. What is the Râmâyaṇa and its sequel the Yogavâsishtha?

A. 14. It is the work of Vâlmîki, and contains the story of the Râmâvatâra, and of the godlike beings who came with him, and are said to have set before that age living examples of a perfect king, a dutiful son, a true brother, a faithful wife, and a devoted follower. Now as the Râmâyana speaks of Râma's outer life, so the Yogavâsishtha is alleged to speak of his inner. It contains the deeper wisdom which he learnt in his youth from the family preceptor Vasiṣhtha, and which guided his actions throughout his earthly life. But judging from the fact that the modern Advaiṭa is taught elaborately in this book it can scarcely

contain much that is ancient, it is a comparatively modern work.

The Râmâyaṇa of Vâlmiki is believed to have been composed during the life-time of the hero; it would thus be over twenty *lacs* of years old! according to some people it was composed in a previous kalpa—this belief intensifies the previous absurdity and neither can be taken seriously by any reasonable human being though everything is possible to orthodoxy! The text of the Râmâyaṇa varies in different parts of the country; and besides the well-known Râmâyaṇa of Vâlmîki, there are many other Râmâyaṇas in Samskriṭ, as also in the various vernaculars. The best known Hinḍi Râmâyaṇa is the work of Ṭulsiḍâs; it might fairly be styled the Veḍa of 90 millions of Hinḍi-speaking Indians.

Q. 15. What is the Mahâbhâraṭa, and its sequel the Harivamsha?

A. 15. It is mainly the story of the great war between the Kauravas and the Pâṅḍavas. It is called Mahâbhâraṭa, because the whole future of Bhâraṭavar-

s h a or India, was involved in the mighty struggle. It is believed to have been written by V e ḍ a - V y â s a, about 5000 years ago, though much the greater portion of its language is fairly modern Samskṛit. It is full of tales of all sorts of men and women, saints as well as sinners, showing the manifold phases of human life; but, running through all these, is the supreme teaching that evil is ever shortlived, and that good ultimately prevails. The influence and authority of this book is immense, as is well evidenced by its other title, the 'fifth Veḍa,' P a ñ c h a m a v e ḍ a. It is an encyclopedia of Indo-âryan laws, manners, customs, politics, ethics, philosophies, social and religious polity, and serves as a complete repertory of the arts of peace as well as of war. The B h a g a v a ḍ - G î ṭ â is the most important of its many important episodes. How far the priestly imagination has run riot in the making up of this and other books to the detriment of sober history may be judged by a single item, that of the 18 army corps, and of their *total* annihilation within 18 days.

The number of lives destroyed on that fatal plain of Kurukshetra was 3,93,660 elephants, 27,55,620 horses, and 82,67,099 men!!!

The Harivamsha is an account of the rise and fall of Shrî Krishṇa's family; its chief point of difference from the Bhâgavaṭa consists in the entire absence of that impassioned Bhakṭi which is so predominant in the latter. There is a widespread feeling even among Pandits that the Bhâgavaṭa is a recent compilation, later than the other Purâṇas, probably produced in an age when Krishṇa worship had degenerated into sensualism.

To the student interested in the causes of the popularity or suppression of books, a fact of some psychological interest is supplied by the respective fates of the Mahâbhâraṭa and the Kathâ Sariṭa Sâgara, The former work, owing to its sacerdotal flavour, was lovingly cherished and embellished by the Brâhmaṇas and, being susceptible of additions holding up vested interests, was gradually transformed from an original of about 20,000

shlokas by Vaishampâyana, and finally by Sauți, to its present size, and took on completely the character of a religious book. The Kathâ Sariţa Sâgara, on the other hand, being a purely secular work, dealing with the everyday life of the people and their folklore, and written in the current speech of the period, was gradually allowed to get lost completely. It was an enormous work, consisting of 700,000 shlokas. A vernacular abstract, in the Paishâcha language, of the size of the present Mahâbhâraṭa, by Guṇâḍhya, is also lost. The present Kathâ Sariṭa Sâgara is a work of about 20,000 shlokas—the size of the original Mahâbhâraṭa—and is the work of Somaḍeva of Kâshmîr, which we owe to the enlightened curiosity of a Queen of Kâshmîr. The three stages through which the two books have passed have a lesson for the enquirer.

Q. 16. Tell us something about the language and the script in which all this literature is written.

A. 16. The whole of this literature is written in the language known as 'Samskṛiṭa',

—literally, 'embellished' or 'polished.' This name itself implies that the language was never a spoken language *of the people*; it has always been the language *of the learned.* The old Hindus were conscious of this fact, and they never regarded Samskṛita as their 'mother tongue', it was always the 'language of the gods'; the language of the people, and of women of all classes was the 'Prâkṛiṭa'; which differed from the 'S a m s k ṛ i ṭ a' in the same manner and to the same extent as the Latin of the ordinary Roman did from the Latin of Cicero or the Greek of the ordinary Athenian from the Greek of Plato.

As regards the popular idea that Samskṛiṭ is the *oldest* language, we have to bear in mind the fact that the language of the Ṛig-veḍa is vastly different from that of the Brâhmaṇas, and still more from that of the later 'classical' period. A modern Paṅḍiṭa, while able to read with comparative ease, a work in the later Samskrit, is absolutely unable to understand a single line of the Ṛig-veda without the help of a commentary written in the later language. The V e ḍ i c lan-

guage appears to be the literary form of one of the many dialects current among the learned of those days and which has followed a line of development similar to that of the Attic Greek. By sheer force of circumstance it gradually came to take on more and more a literary shape, and displaced all the other dialects. Thus the language that produced the Vedic Samhitâs became, by that very circumstance, *fixed.* From this stage onwards, two concurrent streams of development went on:—one consisted in the polishing up the Vedic language till it became the highly complex and artificial language we know as 'Samskrita.'

The second development tended towards the assimilation of the vernaculars of the peoples with whom the Aryans came into contact. From these various distinct developments have arisen the different Prâkrits which again, coming into contact with Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Pashto, have finally developed into the modern Vernaculars of India, specially Hindi or Urdu.

To sum up, one progressed to greater and

greater grammatical complexity and restricted its scope by carefully excluding all foreign words, while the other steadily went on dispensing with grammatical forms till few are left and became full and flexible speeches by assimilating foreign forms and words with which they came in contact. With two such distinct ideals the result has been naturally to produce the tremendous divergence of to-day.

As regards the script, we may call it the 'Devanâgari', bearing however in mind the fact that the Devanâgari characters as now used are the result of a very long course of evolution. And that though very widely extended they are only one form amongst a dozen others, and that they are not quite so perfect as popular prejudice would regard them to be. The earliest specimen available is that known as the 'Kharoshtrî'—i. e. 'from the land of the donkey and the camel'—or 'Kharoshthî', 'like the lip of the donkey', as some people call it. If we bear in mind this fact with regard to the alphabet, we shall be saved from many laughable speculations as

to its having arisen out of ॐ, or from the shape of the peacock and so on.

Q. 17. What are the fundamental religious teachings contained in these books?

A. 17. There is one Supreme Being, "one only without a second". He is spoken of as Brahma in the sacred books, or as the All. He is without beginning or end, without birth, change, or death. Everything comes out of Him, lives in Him, and finally resolves into Him, and there is nothing without Him. He is beyond speech and beyond thought, without name and without form, outside time and space.

In a way that man cannot imagine He appears as Îshvara—God, and Mâyâ—Nature; as Name and Form; as Purusha—Spirit, and Prakṛiṭi—Matter. And these two are ever united; that is, there is no Îshvara without Mâyâ, and no Mâyâ without Îshvara; no Spirit without Matter, and no Matter without Spirit.

Matter, when changed from its chaotic state in a Pralaya to its organized state in a Kalpa reveals itself in three strands called

Saṭṭva, Rajas and Ṭamas. Îshvara working through Rajas is Brahmâ; in his Saṭṭva manifestation, he is Vishṇu and his Ṭâmasa aspect is Shiva. Thus Îshvara reveals Himself in three aspects and Prakṛiṭi or Shakṭi similarly appears as three Beings—Sarasvaṭî, Lakshmî and Pârvaṭî.

Q. 18. Are there any special minor manifestations of Îshvara?

A. 18. Yes; they are many—the eight Vasus, the eleven Ruḍras, the twelve Âḍiṭyas, and the two Âshvins. Inḍra and Prajâpaṭi being typical. These are the 33 Devas of the Veḍas, which early mythology has swelled into 33 Crores. Even these 33 are but various appellations, according to differences of function, of three—Agnî, Vâyû and Sûrya; these, of the earliest days of Hinduism, again being the sons of Prajâpaṭi. The names given below are according to one list, there being many such lists all diverging more or less from each other.

The eight Vasus are Agni, Pṛiṭhivi,

Vâyu, Anṭarikṣha, Âdiṭya, Ḍyu, Chanḍra, and Nakṣhaṭra.

The eleven Ruḍras are Aja, Ekapâṭ, Ahibraḍhna, Pinâkî, Aparâjiṭa, Ṭryambaka, Maheṣvara, Vriṣhâkapi, Ṣhambhu, Haraṇa, and Îshvara.

The Rigveda generally makes mention of only three Âḍiṭyas—Miṭra, Varuṇa and Aryamâ; once it mentions six, which number was later raised to eight, and subsequently, in the Brâhmaṇa period, their number rose to twelve. These twelve are: Varuṇa, Vivasvân, Aryamâ, Pûṣhâ, Ṭvaṣhtâ, Saviṭâ, Bhaga, Ḍhâṭâ, Viḍhâṭâ, Hiṭra, Ṣhakra, and Urukrama. Varuṇa is their Chief.

Inḍra is the King of the Ḍevas, and was prominently worshipped during the time when the Âryans invaded India, and when a vigorous fighting God, and not one who always performs ṭapas, appealed to their martial instincts.

Prajâpaṭi is the being by whose

sacrifice the Universe became manifested.

The other Ḍevas have been divided into eight classes, ordinarily known as B r â h m a, P r â j â p a ṭ y a, A i n ḍ r a, P a i ṭ r a, G a n-ḍ h a r v a, Y a k ṣ h a, R â k ṣ h a s a and P a i ṣ â c h a.

Q. 19. In what way do these Ḍ e v a s manifest their life?

A. 19. Being manifested forces of nature, they manifest themselves—*first* in the physical world, as the phenomena of nature over which they preside, and *secondly*, in their own spheres, which are above as well as below the *physical.*

Q. 20. What are these spheres?

A. 20. Those above the physical, called "b h û h", are: B h u v a ḥ, S v a ḥ, M a h a ḥ, J a n a ḥ, T a p a ḥ and S a ṭ y a; and those below it are: Ṭ a l a, V i ṭ a l a, A ṭ a l a, S u-ṭ a l a, R a s â ṭ a l a, Ṭ a l â ṭ a l a and P â ṭ â l a. A popular misconception with regard to the character of these "lower" spheres might will be corrected here. They are not a sort of hell meant for punishment, they are on

the contrary some of the happiest places of existence.

Q. 21. What is the work of B r a h m â, and how does He do it?

A. 21. B r a h m â is the architect of the Universe; his work consists in making matter to evolve from its causal state—i. e. the state of the chaos in which it exists during P r a l a y a—into states in which it could combine to produce objects and subserve life. 'Ṭ a n m â ṭ r a s', 'Ṭ a ṭ ṭ v a s' and 'I n ḍ r i y a s' are stages in this evolution of matter, which is carried out by the agency of two sets of beings A s u r a s and S u r a s, who, coming out of B r a h m â, 'churn out' "from the ocean", the Ṭ a n m â ṭ r a s, the Ṭ a ṭ ṭ v a s, the I n d r i y â s, as also minerals, plants, animals and men,—under the guidance of V i ṣ h ṇ u.

Q. 22. What are A s u r a s and D e v a s?

A. 22. They are beings who carry on the work of evolution by pulling against each other, as positive and negative forces, and thus causing all forces of attraction and repulsion which underlies this evolution.

Modern science ignores the life-side of nature, consisting of these beings, and speaks merely of their visible embodiments as the forces of regeneration and degeneration, progress and atrophy. Life, whether of men or of nations, is possible only when both these processes are at work, pulling against each other constantly. All life, all progress, is the constant adjustment of the forces of destruction and construction. When the two opposing forces cease to pull against each other, stagnation sets in, heralding Pralaya. The atrophy of structures, ideas, customs, and rites is the necessary complement of every forward step, whether taken in the growth of an individual or of a nation; but these regressions are never in the same order as that of the process by which evolution has taken place. The course of dissolution does not retrace the steps of the process of evolution; that course is never reversed.

Q. 23. What is the work of Vishṇu, and how does He do it?

A. 23. His work is to preserve; and he does this by sustaining the process of the

two contending forces of evolution pulling against each other. He lives in our very hearts, and is the source of our life and intelligence. Our will is His will, our love, His love, our wisdom His wisdom. He lives alike in animals, plants, and minerals; He is everywhere, helping every one and every thing, and no one can break His law without hurting himself.

Q. 24. Does He ever manifest Himself in any special shapes in this world for the purpose of preserving it?

A. 24. Yes, as a Saviour, an avaṭâra; this doctrine of a Messiah, a Saviour, of the Logos becoming flesh, is common to nearly every religion in the world. To a modern man with his vastly wider out-look and his cosmopolitan and humanitarian training such a question is unthinkable and the doctrine underlying it savours perilously of blasphemy. Such a naive belief in being the "elect of the Lord God" is possible only in the earliest stages of racial development, when it could in its then stage of knowledge regard itself complacently as the hub of the uni-

verse, round which everything revolved! The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth all were made for its use and enjoyment and for that alone. For a twentieth century man it is not easy to believe that he belongs to a 'chosen' race and the old world belief that God manifested Himself "fully," for the benefit of this special race, deserting the Universe for the time being and allowing himself to be "cribbed, cabined and confined" in a puny, mortal, human body for the sake of his "chosen ones", is unthinkable. He regards this dogma as degrading to the conception of the Godhead and hence blasphemous. For a wonder among the three living religions, which pin their faith to a revelation, the latest i. e., Islam alone has steered clear of this unphilosophic and unscientific dogma and has evolved the rational faith in prophets. We have to learn to recognise that the avaṭârs are God incarnate only in the philosophic, vedântic sense, of everything being in Him, and from Him, and Him in fact, and not in its literal debasing sense. They are leaders, messengers, yes, but not—bhagavân-swayam—God

Himself.

Q. 25. What is an avaṭâra?

A. 25. An avatâra literally means "one who has descended or come down." He is a person in whom the two streams of consciousness—the normal and the highest supernormal—have become inseparable and indistinguishable; while a person in whom these consciousnesses, though developed, work not always harmoniously, is a saint or ṛiṣhi. The word avaṭâra, however, is popularly used as the name for certain special forms of Viṣhṇu, the maintainer and preserver of the worlds. He comes as an avaṭâra when, without His direct interference, the world would go wrong.

Q. 26. How many avaṭâras are there?

A 26. There are many, but the Bhâgavaṭa mentions by name only twenty-four, of which ten are regarded as typical, namely: (1) Maṭsya; (2) Kûrma; (3) Varâha; (4) Narasimha; (5) Vâmana; (6) Paraṣhurâma; (7) Râma; (8) Kṛiṣhṇa; (9) Buḍḍha; and (10) Kalki. Among the twenty-four is Ṛiṣhabhaḍeva,

the great founder of Jainism.

Q. 27. How was this number of avatâras fixed?

A. 27. It is impossible to give any precise and convincing answer to this question—the whole subject is in an involved, confused, and unsettled condition. To take only one instance: some books state that the first four avaṭâras were those of Brahmâ, and not of Vishṇu; others hold they were the avaṭâras of Brahmâ, but that Vishṇu had taken the shape of Brahmâ, before taking those avaṭâra-forms. Others again hold that all the avaṭâras are of Vishṇu Himself. With regard to Râma and Kṛishṇa the confusion is equally serious; their special bhakṭas say that their brothers, Lakshmaṇa and Balrâma, were avaṭâras, and not they, these being Îshvara Himself; further, the avaṭâras of Vâmana and Parashurâma have been hard to justify in the light of their actions; and so they have been belittled as much as possible. The clear cut theory of the 10 avaṭâras is derived from books not one of which is very much older than 1000 years.

The Mahâbhâraṭa even in its present form does not refer to it.

Q. 28. Why did Vishṇu take such forms as those of Maṭsya, Kûrma, Varâha, Narasimha, and Vâmana?

A. 28. When He took the first three forms, the world was still in the making, the great types of the animal kingdom had alone been evolved; so these prehuman forms only were available for Him. The fourth indicates the unsuccessful effort of the animal form to evolve into the human. The fifth marks the imperfect beginnings of the human form. It may however be pointed out that all these avaṭâras are also kosmic in their activities; and the ages in which they are said to have taken place are far too removed from us, both in time and spirit, for them to become subjects of any profitable speculation, or to yield any tangible results in the present condition of our knowledge. Thus the doctrine of the avatâras may be understood to refer to vaguely formed theories of human evolution. It must not be forgotten however that this interpretation of the old myth is rather mo-

dern. The V e ḍ a s refer to only the animal a v a t â r a s and some of these have been dropped out of the modern P a u r â ṇ i c list, for reasons unknown to us, and new human ones invented. Possibly the earlier V e ḍ i c a v a t â r a s, those of fish, man-lion etc. are only astrologic myths due to Chaldean influences, descriptive of the seasons and their changes as the sun occupies different signs of the zodiac. The sacredness attached to the bull, the serpent, the eagle (g a r u d a), the V e d i c legends about the goat (a j a) are all possibly due to a misunderstanding of astronomical language about the precession of the equinoxes and the successive prominent positions occupied by each of these constellations due to that. As it was necessary to read some sort of meaning in those ancient texts, and the proper key was not forthcoming, the whole of it in course of time and by gradual growth was transformed into a beautifully rounded revelation about a v a t â r a s!

Q. 29. What were the objects of the P a r a s h u r â m a, R â m a, K ṛ i s h ṇ a and B u ḍ ḍ h a a v a ṭ â r a s?

A. 29. (a) The avatâra of Parashurâma is peculiar in many ways; his mother was a Kṣhaṭṭriyâ who had married a Brâhmaṇa; and his advent perhaps marks the stage in Hindu polity when the differences between the various castes were becoming very marked and rigid, on account of differing ideals and clashing interests. Witness his life-long war with the Kṣhaṭṭriyas, whom he is said to have destroyed 21 times. The divergence began in the quarrels of Vashiṣhtha and Vishvâmiṭra in the Vedic times, of which this was the inevitable sequence. The Jain tradition on this subject is very different, and extremely interesting for the antiquarian and the truthseeker.

(b) The avaṭâra of Râma is generally taken to be for the purpose of carrying the simple, self-contained, and withal highly ethical civilisation of the early Âryans to the non-Âryan communities, and for the further purpose of conserving the as yet simple duties of each caste, and the prevention of trenching by the lower caste upon the privileges of the higher castes.

This avaṭâra is alleged to have taken place at the beginning of the Ṭreṭâ age—i. e. about 20,00,000 years ago!

(c) The avaṭâra of Kṛiṣhṇa was for the purpose of destroying the immense influence of the Kṣhaṭṭriyas, who had, in the pride of power, begun to misuse it by employing it for selfish purposes. This was accomplished by the devastating Mahâbhârata war. Another and more important object, which was made possible by this war and the consequent break in the old Hinḍu culture, was the replacing of the formal and ritualistic Hinḍuism of those days by the teaching of tbe sublime doctrines of the Bhagavaḍ Gîṭâ, inculcating that salvation can only be secured through genuine bhakṭi, irrespective of caste, creed or ritualism. Krishṇa has been regarded by his worshippers as more than a mere 'avatâra,'—He is the supreme Lord Himself come down to take care of the Earth,—which, in his sublime self-sufficiency, the man of the earth, regards as the only part of the universe having a claim upon

the beneficence of God. One can only laugh at these preposterous claims of ignorant bigots when Astronomy teaches us that there are millions of Suns—to say nothing of Earths,—most of them larger than our own, and presumably, all of them surrounded by planets scarcely less important than the Earth. It is rather late in the day to continue to maintain the supreme importance of this insignificant little planet in the eyes of God, to the exclusion of the rest of the universe. The Vishṇu Puraṇa has no such illusion with regard to Krishna, whom it regards as the incarnation of one hair of Narayana's beard.

(d) The avaṭâra of Buḍḍha was for the purpose of revivifying the teachings of Kṛishṇa, becoming dim under the baneful influence of a revived and degenerated sacerdotalism, and for supplementing it by preaching that bhakṭi, devoid of true knowledge and strenuous work, is not genuine and hence could not lead to salvation. He came to break down the overweening exclusiveness and spiritual pride of the Brâhmaṇas,

which had grown luxuriantly after the check of the Kshattriya was removed by the destruction wrought amongst them by the Mahâbhârata war, as Kṛishṇa had done of the Kshaṭṭriyas,—and to preach the law of a higher life and truer sacrifice, of world-embracing mercy, and the equality of opportunity for spiritual unfolding to all humanity. Buḍḍha introduced no sweeping changes; all that he did was to make clear what was implicit in Shri Kṛishṇa's teachings. Even the caste-system was not denounced by him, as is popularly but erroneously believed. It was a tactical mistake made by his late followers when, instead of following the Master's example of *raising* his followers to the level of Brâhmaṇas, and thus gaining widespread support, they tried to suppress the system iteslf, and were therefore hounded out of India, as soon as their kings lost their sovereignty. It was the teaching of Buḍḍha and the Jains that, at a subsequent date, was put forward in a modified and new garb by Ṣhañkarâchârya; and it is for this reason that the Vedântis of the school of Ṣhañkara

have been called "prachchhanna," masked, "Bauḍḍhas."

Out of all these numerous avaṭâras only Râma and Kṛishṇa excite love and worship in these days throughout India. The others exist only in the sacred books—except Buḍḍha who is widely reverenced and worshipped in many parts of Asia, and has also a large following in Europe and America.

Q. 30. What will be the work of Kalki?

A. 30. The Kalki will be in a Brâhmaṇa body, and his main work will be the bringing back of the Saṭyayuga, and the establishment of one caste, the Brâhmaṇa. For by the time he comes, all caste distinctions will have become wholly confused, and it will be his great work to merge them all into one class, to unify the Veḍas, to purify the Ḍharma, and to re-establish righteousness. This process of caste confusion has been going on for ages now; when Yudhishthira was questioned about it by Nahusha his answer was clear and unequivocal. It was character that made caste and not birth;

for men and women of all castes indiscriminately consorted with each other and so the resulting births were very mixed indeed. If such was the state of affairs thousands of years ago, it is far more so to-day. We see every day the lower castes becoming higher and higher, and even outcastes being gradually merged into the Hinḍu fold, through the agency of the great converting schisms, or branches, of Hinḍuism.

Just as real growth is always from *within*, and is not something superimposed from without, so real disruption also is from *inside*, other causes being mere accessories; the disintegrating process proceeds from the organism itself. So the real redemption of the B r â h m a ṇ a, and with him of the Hinḍu, can come only through a B r â h m a ṇ a: and so K a l k i will be a B r â h m a ṇ a. R â v a ṇ a could be destroyed by R â m a only when V i b h î s h a ṇ a, his own brother, defected to R â m a ' s side.

Q. 31. What is the work of S h i v a, and how does He do it?

A. 31. His work is to destroy. After

the rajoguṇa of Brahmâ has built up our bodies, and given us form and existence, and the saṭṭvaguṇa of Vishṇu has filled us with life and intelligence, comes the time when the impetuous and out-rushing râjasic energy of the Jîva is forcibly arrested by collision with the ṭamoguṇa of Ṣhiva. This sudden check to the motion of the Jîva shatters the encasing earthly passions, and brings it to rest and peace; and the Jîva, thus thrown back upon itself, realises at a bound its real nature, never to lose it again in that Kalpa. We can see the work of the Ṭrimûrṭi in a dim way in our daily life; (1) in our waking up; (2) in the doing of our daily duties; and (3) in our going to sleep.

The worship and conception of the Ṭrimûrṭi—Brahmâ, Vishṇu and Shiva—as the supreme deities was evolved in much later times. During the Veḍic period, Inḍra, Varuṇa, Agni and a few such others were the principal Gods and of the Ṭrimûrti, Brahmâ as 'Prajâpaṭi' and Vishṇu were recognised as Gods, though not prominent; while

Ṣ h î v a is not mentioned in the Ṛ i g v e ḍ a, It was about a 1,000 years ago that the worship of B r a h m â began to be supplanted by that of V i s h ṇ u, and at the present time, there are only two temples dedicated to B r a h m â, in the whole of India. About 900 years ago, when Alberouni came to India, B r a h m â worship was still in vogue, and the worship of V i s h ṇ u had only just begun to appear. During the last 500 years again, S h i v a worship having been started in the South, has spread over the other parts of India. That the Ṭ r i m û r ṭ i did not occupy the supreme position in earlier times is proved by the fact that in the old rockcut temples, the figures met with are not those of V i s h ṇ u and S h i v a, but those of I n ḍ r a and other V e ḍ i c deities. In the M a h â b h â r a ṭ a, the word 'Ṭ r i m û r ṭ i' is met with only *once*, in a verse where the three are said to be only different forms or functions of P r a j â p a ṭ i.

The above facts as to our having in the course of ages completely put aside the V e ḍ i c gods V a r u ṇ a, I n ḍ r a and others and installed in thir seats M a h â-

ḍeva, Vishṇu &c. might be pondered over and laid to heart by all those people who talk of Vedic religion and Sanâṭana Ḍharma, and who repudiate indignantly the suggestion that the religion has been changing and will continue to change, and that it would be better, to make the changes intelligently than allow the policy of drift, to batter it into undesirable shapes.

Q. 32. Why is Mahâḍeva, unlike other Gods who are given a human or semi-human shape, worshipped only as a Phallus?

A. 32. It is difficult to give any explanation of the mystery which would be at all reasonable and convincing. It is not that Mahâḍeva is *never* worshipped in a human shape, but such images are very rare. One could only hazard a guess and say that probably the Shiva cult as we have it to-day is a blend of two sets of ritual and that the Vedic worship of Ruḍra was not powerful enough to displace completely the aboriginal Phallus-worship, which the Ṛishis met with in the country of their migration. These people are referred to in the Vedas as Shishna-ḍevâḥ, i. e. people whose God is a Phallus. The

Rishis finding themselves helpless before such a widespread popular Natureworship, superadded to this crude form their own higher conceptions of religion and morality and assimilated it so completely in this disguised shape, that now it is impossible to say exactly what the process was. The Paurâṇic stories about this subject are much too gross and silly for any truly religious and refined person to believe, they unmistakably show their savage origin. For further light on the subject the only book available in English is Hargrave Jenning's *Phallicism.*

Q. 33. Why are the images of Hindu Gods and Godesses so wanting in beauty and the art of the sculptor?

A. 33. This again is a question which it is much easier to ask than to answer. As far as I know no attempt even at an answer has been made. All of us see, as a matter of fact, that all the images are very common-place, and thoroughly conventional and always exceedingly crude. Even the image of Kṛishṇa, the god of beauty, over whose description a flood of gorgeous words is poured out almost hysteric in its intensity,

are no better than other images. As far as we can gather the old Hindu never became capable of working on canvas or in stone. He too like the Musalman despised painting and statuary and originally was not an idol-worshiper. Perhaps in this case also it came to be a question of expediency. Coming into a new country and finding all sorts of idols, human, semi-human, animal being worshipped, they gave them a meaning and a place in their own pantheon and, thus sugared, they swallowed the bitter pill.

It is not always remembered that this migration did not take place in one terrific rush sweeping away all barriers before its irresistable might, but that it took place in driblets, possibly not unlike the Parsi emigration, which took place under the stress of persecution at home, in which only a very small number could escape and carry away fragments only of their scriptures with them. The handful of aryans that wandered away from their original home for refuge and shelter from some overwhelming catastrophe which broke up their power and scattered their civilisation, were thus under

the dire necessity of accepting externally at least the gods of the people among whom they came to dwell. Here in the course of time they began to piece together, from the remnants of their imperfectly preserved and fragmentary literature and a more or less hazy memory of traditions and the meaning of this literature, a faith which they fondly imagined was the same which their ancestors had practiced ages before in their early happy home; but which as a matter of fact was deeply coloured by their new surroundings and was very different from the original faith and civilisation. That this guess is not altogether improbable is borne out by the subsequent history of India. Buddhist shrines have been bodily annexed by the Hindus and the image of Buḍḍha made to do duty for that of V i s h ṇ u. A similar fate has overtaken many Hindu shrines when they have been filched away from the custody of one sect into that of another. The idol has been given a new name and another ritual substituted and lo the transformation is complete! It is nobody's interest to record these things and in a few generations the memory even of such

a gross imposition fades and disappears. The Christians and the Musalmans have behaved exactly in the same way. They could not destroy the earlier ways completely so they covered it with a veneer of their own new faith. The Kâbâ has a black stone Phallus and Rome preserves in St. Peter's chair a seat of the Pagan pontiffs.

Coming back to our point, these gods are probably relics of the stone age and having become an integral part of a higher civilisation, gained a longer lease of life thereby. Their very ugliness has helped them to this immortality, working as they did on the terror of their devotees. We see to-day how the hideousness of the image of Kâli and her bloody surroundings have so stamped their terror on the plastic nerves of the youth that however clever, educated and unbelieving he may grow to be; the Bengali cannot get over his reverance and faith in the gruesome Goddess: so too does the ugly shapeless idol of Jagannath inspire his votaries all over India. No amount of experience of life or rationalistic education seems to be powerful enough to withstand the touch of these early

ingrained associations of fear. Anthropological investigations have proved beyond cavil the fact that the beginning of worship is in the emotion of fear and not in that of love and it is only at a late stage of growth that increasing civilisation succeeds in replacing in the race the early savage element of fear by that of love. Amongst all the idolatrous nations it was the Greeks only who succeeded in endowing with surpassing beauty the images of their Gods.

Q. 34. What do you mean by Yuga and Kalpa?

A. 34. Yugas and Kalpas are periods into which the past and future history of the cosmos are divided. A Yuga may be generally defined as a period of time, in which some one definite function, or form, of individual or racial life is worked out. The Purâṇas have given four names to the four periods, as distinguished by well-marked characteristics :—

1. The Saṭya or Kṛiṭa Yuga, marked by an excess of truthfulness, universal charity, strong-willed austerities, and un-

stinted mercy, due to the predominance of the sattva guṇa. During this period the evolution of the Jîva is by means of meditation only. The presiding deity of the age is Brahmâ. It lasts for 1,728,000 years.

2. The Ṭreṭâ Yuga; this period is marked by the absence of austerities, and the Jîva abounds in truthfulness, charity, and mercy, and evolves by means of knowledge. The presiding deity of the age is Ravi, the Sun. The predominating guṇa is that of rajas, as evinced by an enhanced physical activity. It lasts for 1,296,000 years.

3. The Dvâpara Yuga; truthfulness and charity are the only marked charactersitics; and the Jîva rises by sacrifices only. Vishṇu is the presiding deity of this age. The predominating guṇa is that of rajas tinged with ṭamas, as shown by the appearance of strong desires, want of contentment etc., etc. It lasts for 864,000 years.

4. The Kali Yuga; truth is the sole

feature of redemption in this age. The J î v a rises by means of D â n a, charity and benevolence in their broadest sense. T a m a s is the predominating g u ṇ a, as shown by untruthfulness, uncontrolled sense-activity, and so forth. It lasts for 432,000 years.

The theory of the four Y u g a s is apparently modelled on the periods of the growth of man. Thus the S a ṭ y a Y u g a corresponds to childhood when evil is impossible, morality non-existent, and brain growth rapid; the T r e t â Y u g a is the period of early adolescence when the youth is physically very aetive. The D v â p a r a Y u g a is the period of desires, when r a j a s is very powerful. The K a l i Y u g a is the period of manhood when the early golden ideals are broken by the disillusions of the world as it is and the man either sinks under this disenchantment or rises into a higher S a ṭ y a epoch of an old age mellowed by wisdom and abounding in the real bliss of a life fruitfully lead.

Another view of this question of Y u g a s is also propounded in that storehouse of Âryan knowledge, the M a h â b h â r a ṭ a, in

the Vanaparva. It is that the qualities of each yuga are not so much dependent on some particular time, as on the character of the Ruler for the time being, and that it is his quality which is imposed on the country he rules, irrespective of the time. The popular proverb, "as the Ruler so the Ruled," points to the truth of this doctrine.

These Yugas may also be understood to be cycles in which human and cosmic evolutions run, and apply as well to the whole world as to countries, institutions, individuals and so forth. Thus every religious institution begins by—(1) being a pure statement of spiritual truth, coupled with a method of self-training to reach it, when it is first propounded. (2) It then becomes a church militant and actively spreads. (3) It then degenerates into an elaborate formalism with a touch of its inspiriting life visible here and there. (4) last, it becomes a festering sore to the community, the enemy of all progress, and either dies or phenix-like rises to be welded into a purer faith.

It has also to be noted that any age is,

from one point of view, in one Yuga and from another point of view, in another Yuga. Thus we are in Kali Yuga with reference to the old Veḍic system of animal sacrifice, and we may be in the Saṭya Yuga from the point of view of material progress. The theory of an original and primitive state of innocence and pure goodness, from which mankind has degenerated, has no basis in fact; it can at best, be characterised only as a pious fraud.

These four yugas together constitute a mahâyuga. Seventy-one mahâyugas make the manvanṭara, the name being due to the fact that at the close of each such period a new Manu appears to guide the destiny of the world. Fourteen such manvanṭaras go to make a kalpa. The kalpa is a "day" of Brahmâ; it is the the period of time during which He is awake, and carries on the creation. At the close of a kalpa, when He goes to sleep, the whole Univere becomes engulfed in a grand deluge, to appear again at the next awakening of Brahmâ, after His sleep, lasting through the whole of His "night," which is equal in

duration to His "day." The period of time between two mahâpralayas is called a "day of Brahmâ," because Brahmâ sees the sun as long as the sun exists; and the sun exists until the mahâpralaya.

The tremendous durations of the Yugas have been probably manufactured from the numbers 4, 3, 2, and O by various multiplications and therefore need not be taken to correspond to any reality.

Q. 35. Are there any other "days" described in the Shâsṭras?

A. 35. Yes. (1) The "days of the Gods" —equal to our twelve months; they see the sun as long as he is in the northern hemisphere, and this is their "day"; and the time during which the sun is in the southern hemisphere it is "night" for the Gods. (2) The "day of the Piṭṛis"—equal to our "month." The Piṭṛis see the sun while he is on the other side of the moon from us; hence the time at which the moon is not visible to us, the sun is at its zenith for the Piṭṛis, for whom this is "midday"; and similarly when the sun is between the

earth and the moon, it is "midnight" for the Piṭṛis.

Q. 36. Tell us something about the constitution of man.

A. 36. Man is a ray of Îshvara, ordinarily called a Jîva or Jîvâṭmâ. He clothes himself first in the kârana-sharîra, or causal-body, then in the sûkṣhma-sharîra, or desire-body, and finally in the sthûla-sharîra, or physical-body, through which and by which last alone action is possible in this world. We see the physical-body only, and very rarely the two finer bodies, and never the Jîva, which is our real Self. The Jîva never dies, but the bodies wear out, and, when cast off by the Jîva, are said to die.

Q. 37. What is this Jîva or Jîvâtmâ?

A. 37. It is what is popularly known as Spirit, and sometimes, as soul, that which knows, desires and acts. Though its real nature as Praṭyagâṭmâ is that of samviṭ, or pure consciousness, yet during its life on earth, it manifests itself only in desires, actions and cognitions, all

these being due to the action and interaction of the three guṇas, with various combinations of which the Spirit becomes clothed during its descent.

Q. 38. What is Samvit.?

A. 38. That condition of the Puruṣha in which it is aware of the existence of the functionings or modifications of the mind, is called 'Samviṭ.' The Puruṣha and the mind with its modifications exist independently of each other. Just as while the Puruṣha sleeps and is unconscious, the world continues to exist, so also are the modifications of the mind always taking place; though the Puruṣha is unaware of them. It is only when the Puruṣha turns its attention to these modifications that he becomes conscious of their existence. It is this consciousness, by the Puruṣha, of the existence of the modifications of the mind that is called 'Samviṭ.' It may be likened to a ray of light emanating from the Puruṣha, impinging on the mind and illuminating it and thus bringing it within the purview of the Puruṣha.

Q. 39. What are these g u ṇ a s?

A. 39. They are the three attributes assumed by the Spirit, though in reality belonging to, and inhering in, P r a k ṛ i ṭ i, or Matter. They are (1) S a ṭ ṭ v a, purity, goodness, peace, inhibition; (2) R a j a s, foulness, passion, activity, motor, and (3) Ṭ a m a s, darkness, dulness, passivity, inertia. (1) gives rise to cognition, or knowledge; (2) to activity, or movement; and (3) to desire or emotion.

The doctrine of the g u ṇ a s appears to have developed out of Astronomy, where 'a n ṭ a r i k ṣ h a,' the region of the moving winds, is known as 'R a j a s.' After this analogy, the Earth would naturally become 'Ṭ a m a s'; and the shining region beyond A n ṭ a r i k s h a, 'S a ṭ ṭ v a.' The Astronomer-Philosopher Ṛ i s h i s began to speculate upon this, and finally ended by making the 'three g u ṇ a s' a cardinal doctrine of S â ṅ - k h y a, from which it was later adopted by V e ḍ â n ṭ a.

Q. 40. How is the J î v a regarded from the standpoint of s a m v i ṭ, and with regard

to matter?

A. 40. It is regarded as "ḍrashṭâ," seer with regard to the Samviṭ; and with reference to matter, as 'bhokṭâ,' the enjoyer of pleasure and pain.

Q. 41. What are we to understand by the word "Praṭyagâṭmâ"?

A. 41. The Inner Self, that which in all things whatsoever, manifests as the consciousness illuminating cognitions, emotions and actions.

Q. 42. What do you mean by the consciousness illuminating cognitions &c.?

A. 42. It is the simplest fact in our life, and cannot be explained any farther. It is that in us, because of which we always know or 'see' our minds and bodies acting. This consciousness is never broken; hence the proof of its eternity.

Q. 43. Has the Jîva any size or sex?

A. 43. No. Size and sex belong to the bodies, which are changeable; the Spirit, or Jîva, is their unchanging "inner ruler," Anṭaryâmin, having a continuous exis-

tence and remaining one throughout its experiences, in the form of consciousness.

Q. 44. Is the Jîva always in the same state of consciousness?

A. 44. No. The states of its consciousness have been divided into four:—

(1) The Jâgraṭa, or waking, when the physical senses are fully active, and the Jîva has its cognitions directly through them. In this state the embodied Jîva is known by the name of "Vishva"; and Brahmâ, presiding over such Jîvas, is known as "Vaishvânara" or "Virâta," the awarder of the fruits of actions to Jîvas in the forms of pleasure and pain.

(2.) Svapna, or dream-consciousness, consists of the cognitions that the Jîva has when it dreams during sleep, during which the external sense-organs are dull and inactive; and these cognitions are due mainly to the working of the subtle senses and Vâsanâs. In this state the Jîva is known as "Taijasa," and the corresponding name of Brahmâ is "Hiraṇyagarbha."

(3) Sushupṭi, or dreamless sleep-consciousness, during which the Jîva for the time being reverts to its pristine state of Ânanḍa, bliss, and is free from all touch with its various limitations and encasings. During this state it is called "Prâjña," and the corresponding name of Brahmâ is Îshvara, the "ruler of all."

(4). The Ṭurîya, pure consciousness, during which the Jîva realises its unity with the Over-soul, Paramâṭmâ. This state differs from the last in that, in the Sushupṭi state, there is still present the seed of the idea of separateness, which makes the Ânanḍa transitory, while in the Ṭurîya all idea of separateness is completely lost, and the bliss attendant upon the absolute realisation of unity is permanent.

Q. 45. Tell us something about the "bodies" of the Jîva?

A. 45. The 'physical,' 'subtle' and 'causal' are the "three worlds" through which lies the pilgrimage of the Jîva, repeated again and again, throughout its evolution.

The J î v a, when it takes on a body after its formless existence, begins its new life-period by putting forth the energies which function in the causal world, these energies being the resultant of his previous life-periods. The energies gather round themselves the materials that go to form (1) the Causal or Thought-body, the K â r a ṇ a-s h a r î r a, of the J î v a.

Then the vibrations of these mental energies arouse the energies belonging to the desire-nature; and these begin to vibrate, and draw round them materials for their expression; these materials go to form (2) the Subtle or Desire-body, the S û k ṣ h m a-s h a r î r a, of the J î v a.

The J î v a having thus become clothed in its Causal and Subtle vestures—wherein are expressed the faculties gained during its past lives—is next drawn to the family which is to provide it with (3) the Physical or Action-body, the S t h û l a-s h a r î r a suitable for the due expression of its stored up energies on the physical plane.

Q. 46. How would you reconcile this

with the Vedâṇṭic conception of the five Koshas?

A. 46. The Prâṇamaya and the Annamaya Koshas of the Veḍâṅṭin stand for the life and form aspects, respectively, of the physical or Action-Body; the Manomayakosha stands for the Subtle or Emotion or Desire-Body and the Vijñânamayakosha for the form aspect of the Causal or Thought-Body; and the Ânaṅḍamayakosha stands for the formless aspect of the same.

The 'Subtle' body called 'Liṅga-ḍeha', is made up of undifferentiated elements, avishesha, and is not, like the physical body, something solid and definite, and hence capable of being divided and subdivided on definite lines. For this reason it lends itself to being regarded as one only, or being sub-divided in various ways. In this subdivision there is ample room for individual fancy; just as in the classifications of the Mind into 'faculties' in European philosophy. Hence the various classifications are not matters of *fact*, but of *opinion*.

Scientific accuracy is not to be expected in the treatment of this subject as it is not susceptible of demonstration, and each writer follows his own fancy in dealing with the subject.

Q. 47. Can we obtain any idea of the working of the two finer bodies?

A. 47. Yes, to some extent. (*a*) When the energy surging up is muddy and destructive like a devastating lava-stream, leading to a loss of will, obsession, hysteria, lunacy, to anti-social, immoral and anarchic thoughts and actions, we may be certain that these are the fruits of the kâmloka, brought about by the operation of the energies of the Desire-body shattering the barriers of the normal human will, and obtruding their hideous faces on a dismayed world.

(*b*) But when the energy flowing out is pre-eminently life-giving, like the clear and limpid mountain-stream, fed by the melting snows, leading to thoughts and actions which are pre-eminently social, moral, intellectual, and altruistic, and are a shining

beacon to the dwellers of the valleys, we may be equally certain that the influences are from the K â r a ṇ a world, finding expression in the energisation of the Thought-body.

Q. 48. What does the J î v a do when it gives up the physical body?

A. 48. When a man dies, he loses his body of action; his thoughts and desires stay with him and repeat themselves for a while. The persistence of desires in the absence of the k a r m e ṅ ḍ r i y a s, which alone furnish the means of gratification, constitutes the sufferings undergone in the world next to this,—called the P r e ṭ a l o k a.

Q. 49. What happens to the J î v a in the P r e ṭ a l o k a?

A. 49. Bad men—for example, those who tell lies, get drunk, are cruel to women, children and animals, are false to friends and country—are very unhappy and suffer a great deal; but good ones suffer comparatively little, not having allowed themselves during their earthly life to be enslaved by desires. After this period is over, the J î v a

puts off the Pretaloka body and goes to Pitriloka, and from that to Svarga, where he dwells in happiness in the Svarga-body, till the fruits of his good actions are consumed.

Q. 50. What happens to the Jîva in Svargaloka?

A. 50. He changes the good thoughts and desires of his past life on earth into definite mental and emotional moods, or capacities, and these are reborn with him in his next re-incarnation, forming what is called his 'character.' When the thought-impulses, started during life are finally exhausted he returns to re-incarnation. The process, however, goes on in his earth-life by sustained thought, or meditation, but is carried on much more effectively in Svarga, where he is living in his mental body, unencumbered with the grosser vehicles.

Q. 51. What is the duration of these lives in the subtler worlds?

A. 51. No precise answer can be given to this question, though a general principle may

be indicated. After a life spent in animal gratifications, with very little activity in pure emotions and thoughts, the life in Preṭaloka will be long, and that in Piṭṛiloka and Svargaloka short. But where the lower nature has been subordinated to the higher, and much force has been spent in pure emotions and thoughts, the life in Preṭaloka will be short, and that in Piṭṛiloka and Svarga will be long. In some exceptional cases the svargic life may extend to thousands of years while in others, a man may be reborn very quickly, for the sake of serving humanity.

Q. 52. What happens to the Jîva when the Svarga life ends?

A. 52. The Jîva, with the help of the Ḍevas, begins to make anew the finer bodies for himself. He does this in order to be fit for his next life on earth; and when these are ready he is then born again. The Hinḍû teaching about rebirth is not that of a progressive evolution from lower to higher, all sorts of "frogjumps" are indulged in, a human Jîva as the result of Karma may

become in its next earth life, a tree, a stone, a filthy vermin. This doctrine so solemnly enunciated by the much bepraised Manu is so unphilosophic and repellent that it would be laughable, were it not so pitiable. Even the beauty-loving and logical Greeks held to this irrational and absurd belief. Abû-Yâkub of Sijistan, a country beyond Sindh, seems to have been the first teacher according to Alberouni, who evolved a more sensible system out of this bewildering chaos, so repugnent to human dignity, about 1100 year ago. He definitely taught that the soul never overstepped the barriers of the species in the process of reincarnation. The modern Theosophists have added to this the idea of a gradual pilgrimage of the soul through pre-mineral, mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and supra-human forms in a steadily ascending scale. The educated Hindu is discarding the old crude idea in favour of this more symmetrical one.

The doctrine of the transmigration of the soul is unknown to Zoroastrian scriptures. Neither do the Vedic Samhitâs contain

any statement of the doctrine. The earliest reference to it seems to occur only in the Chândogya Upanishad. The doctrine seems to have been unknown to Madame H. P. Blavastky also till a very late stage of her career—since then however it has become one of the cardinal faiths of Theosophy.

Q. 53. Then why is he born? Is it to consume the fruits of his bad deeds?

A. 53. He takes birth not only to consume the fruits of his bad deeds; but also to carry on his lifework, interrupted by the assimilative and rest-giving svargic existence. He has of course not wholly exhausted the fruits of his good karma; nor has he left behind him an altogether unexhausted stock of bad karma, a portion of the latter having been worked off in Pretaloka.

Q. 54. What do you say to the doctrine of 'hell'?

A. 54. The idea underlying the doctrine of 'hell' is that the Jîva must bear the consequences of its misdeeds. As the sufferings undergone by the Jîva on this

earth itself are the direct effect of past misdeeds, there is no room for an extra-physical 'hell'. This was the old Hindû view: it has been clearly and repeatedly stated by King Y a y â ṭ i in the Â ḍ i P a r v a of the M a h â b h â r a ṭ a, that there is no other 'N a r a k a' than this very Earth.

At a much later time, the perverse imagination of a venal and pampered priesthood produced 'hells' of surpassing terrors, and the doctrine of dispensation through P r â y a s h-c h i ṭ ṭ a. The barbarous punishments current in those days,—steeping human beings up to their lips in rotting ordure, building them up in walls and foundations, boiling them in oil, roasting them over slow fire &c. &c.—supplied the groundwork on which all sorts of possible and impossible methods of extraphysical punishments were built up. It was used as a weapon to terrorise over the ignorant laity and bring them under subjection, and make them give enormous presents. The G a r u ḍ a P u r â ṇ a where all these hideous horrors of 'hell' are set forth in great detail, is a very late work, and of absolutely no value. The whole doctrine is as blasphemous as it

is untrue. How can a merciful God who sees through the heart and temptations that beset poor erring human beings, inflict such savage tortures upon his creatures, and himself sit enthroned happy and peaceful? These 'hells' invented by the utterly corrupt and selfish priesthood are all for those people themselves,—their sins being many and varied,—and not for the laity.

The popular belief is that the tortures of 'hell' are suffered by the wicked and the sinful and the people on the lower scale of evolution. But it would be nearer the truth to say that the higher progressed and more refined and altruistic the individual the worse the 'hell' for him. The misery of being unable to help, to ameliorate the life-conditions of poor ignorant suffering humanity grows greater as egotism diminishes and the perception of unity increases: the finer the character the greater the suffering: this is the real 'hell'; and from this there is neither escape, nor even the desire to escape. The real sting of it lies in an ever-growing and clearer perception of inability to help. This goes on increasing until egotism is entirely

subdued, and the *truth* bursts upon the individual conciousness that the whole thing is a v i d y â.

Q. 55. How do you reconcile this with the popular conception of 'Y a m a r â j a', as the 'chastiser' of the dead?

A. 55. This conception of 'Y a m a' is very modern. In the early works, Y a m a is nowhere depicted as the Arch-Inquisitor, ever devising diabolical tortures and taking delight in the harrowing sufferings of the damned; on the contrary, he appears there as the gracious lord of the dead, and has a beautiful court, attended not only by the dead, but by the great living Ṛ i s h i s also.

Q. 56. Why are people differently circumstanced in life—some poor, others rich, some weak, others strong?

A. 56. This depends upon how they have acted in their previous lives: whether they have neglected or utilised their opportunities of being useful to the world.

Q. 57. Why are some people born with good tendencies, and others with bad?

A. 57. As J î v a s thought and desired

and acted in their past lives, according to that they have become what they are in their present. If we think good thoughts, have good desires, and do good deeds, we will, in our next birth, have a good heart, a good mind, and a good body; but if we think evil thoughts, have evil desires and do evil deeds, when we are born again our mind, heart, and body will not be good; and so we will have much strife and trouble. It is the Bhâvanâ, Vâsanâ, and Kṛiyâ of the Jîva that make him either good or bad, and happy or unhappy.

Q. 58. What is Bhâvanâ or Jñâna?

A. 58. The concious intra-cerebral response of the Self to outer stimuli,is *Thought* or *cognition*; that is, cognizing objects and its own dealings with these objects. In other words, the attempt of the Self to understand its relation to the Not-Self and the relation among themselves of the various Not-Selves; the only way of attaining to self-consciousness being through this contrast. The method of ideation is by mental pictures of a dramatic character of pleasures and pains, which the

Jîva has experienced and dwelt upon in this attempt to understand his own real nature.

Q. 59. What is Vâsanâ, or Ichchhâ?

A. 59. It is the desire or wish to have things which we fancy would add to our life, making it fuller and richer and thus giving pleasure, and the feeling of pain if they are denied, or give pain even if granted, because of our mistaken fancy.

Q. 60. What is Kṛiyâ, or action?

A. 60. It is activity in the physical world, which results when bhâvanâ and vâsanâ have become too strong to be resisted by the inertia of the physical body.

Q. 61. Why should our goodness or badness, happiness or misery, depend on our thoughts, desires and actions?

A. 61. Good desires stimulate good thoughts, and these latter, when sufficiently strong, result in good actions; similarly evil desires generate evil thoughts, which lead to evil actions. Good actions necessarily cause harmony and happiness, as bad ones cause

jangle and misery. This is the moral law that rules the world.

Goodness leads to happiness, because it works along with Îshvara's will. It is always pleasant to sail with the wind, but troublesome to breast the storm; so if we work along with Îshvara's will, it is easy and pleasant; if we set ourselves against it,—as we do when we desire and work for our particular gain at the expense of others,—we go against His will; and in doing this, we knock our head as it were, against the solid wall of Îshvara's will, and it causes pain. A harmony of wills, like a harmony of sounds, causes pleasure, and discord pain.

Q. 62. Is any name given to this law?

A. 62. It is called Karma; the word means action; and as such it is used as a name of the great law of action and reaction. It is a law, because it meets without fail all good and bad deeds with their proper results of pleasure and of pain. This same law is also partially understood by the name of "Fate," "Destiny," "Aḍrishta," "Apûrva," etc.

Q. 63. Into how many classes has the force of Karma been divided?

A. 63. Three:—(1) Sañchiṭa or "gathered up in previous births," a name given to the aggregate of the force of past thoughts, desires, and actions, which exists as the potential cause of endless future births,—that which is not to be manifested into activity during present life; it is a sort of reserve of character not to be drawn upon during present life.

(2) Prârabḍha, 'begun,' is the name given to that portion of the Karma which is to take effect in one definite incarnation of the Jîva. These two can only be exhausted by being experienced.

(3) Âgâmi, 'augmentative' is a name applied to the forces set in motion by the actions done by the Jîva during the present life.

Q. 64. In what way does this law affect the Jîvas?

A. 64. When a Jîva is born, he begins, from the moment of this birth, to

experience and work out the results of his Prârabdha Karma; and this process goes on and on until the Prârabdha Karma is exhausted and the Jîva attains to Brahma-jñâna; after this, even though he continues to gather Âgâmi Karma by performing actions, these do not affect him personally in any way, on account of his Ahamkâra having fallen off. The force, however, set in motion by these actions cannot be destroyed; but it gets deflected, and is utilised in the helping of other Jîvas. These actions thus having no binding force for that Jîva, the attains Mukṭi, deliverance, after having worked off all his Prârabdha and Sañchiṭa Karma.

Many people have a curious way of regarding Karma as a deposit account with a bank and feel that they must seek pain and misery that they may secure a good balance at their bank or work off past deposits of bad Karma and wipe off debts as a bankrupt does in the insolvency court. But it is only the development of the virtues

in one's character that can counteract the effects of the evil emotions of the past and not suffering as such.

Q. 65. Does not this law lead to fatalism?

A. 65. No. Rightly understood, this law teaches the doctrine of strenuous action, and not that of passive fatalism; it insists on the necessity of a full-bodied activity in all the phases of existence—physical, social, moral, intellectual and spiritual. The doctrine of 'fatalism' has no existence in fact; it exists only in words; in fact it is in its very essence opposed to human nature, which can never remain quiescent, it must assert itself; this innate power which drives humanity into action has been called the "instinct of workmanship." As a matter of actual facts, there is not one thorough-going 'fatalist' in the world.

Q. 66. How can we know good actions from bad?

A. 66. Whatever is in accord with the progressive, building-up aspect of the Divine

Will is good; whatever is opposed to it is bad.

The purport of this Divine Will is seen in the evolution of the world around us by wise men who study Nature, and our Ṛiṣhis have explained it in the Shâsṭras, as they understood this working of God in Nature. So we must always be careful to interpret the Shâsṭras in accordance with the Will of God as revealed in Nature, whenever this is unmistakable, and not in a narrow philological or theological spirit as is but too often done by a bigoted priesthood.

Q. 67. Please tell us something about this Evolution?

A. 67. We see in this world that life depends on life, form on form. One form breaks up to be built into another, better and more expressive; one life passes away to give place to another, higher and more progressive; cruder forms are ever making room for finer, meaner life for nobler. This process is called Evolution; and it is as much a process of pain as of pleasure; for while assimilation, expansion, growth, bring plea-

sure, this is ever preceded by a disintegration, breaking up, which means pain. Therefore, to be in accord with the Divine Will, or the purpose of evolution, is to bear pain as readily as pleasure, for the sake of a fuller and richer life. This is the true Ḍ h a r m a.

Q. 68. How is this kind of action styled?

A. 68. This is spoken of as Y a j ñ a, or Sacrifice; its essence is giving; it is the purposeful foregoing of pleasure and possession for the sake of doing good to other beings. By divine y a j ñ a the universe has been manifested, and by the continuous y a j ñ a of all beings it is maintained. A well conducted human life ought to consist of a constant practice of this fundamental Ḍ h a r m a of well-directed sacrifice. The J î v â ṭ m â in the earlier stages of its manifestation cannot impress this lesson on its M a n a s from inside, so to say; the M a n a s has to learn this lesson involuntarily from Nature from outside, as it were. As the control of the J î v â ṭ m â over the M a n a s grows, this Ḍ h a r m a begins to be practised voluntarily and with joy, till the J î v â ṭ m â

can become an unhampered co-worker with Îshvara, the source and fount of all sacrifice,—all cosmic activity being a process of *giving* by Îshvara, without any expectatation of repayment. The yajñas referred to in the Vedas and expounded in the Brâhmaṇas and later systematised in the Shrauṭa Sûṭras are mere ritualistic embodiments of this fundamental principle, suited to the conditions of life prevalent in ancient India. That these conditions were far from refined will be clear to any one who studies the Samhiṭâs. The buffooneries and obscenities are too gross to be mentioned in any but the old Veḍic language as an unbiassed perusal of the Ashvameḍha ritual as described in the Yajur-Veḍa would show. Certain methods of sacrificing the animals also are extremely brutal: every orifice being closed, the animal is pounded to death by the fists of the officiating priests. All this however revolted the developed humanity of a later age and made it evolve the system of 'pishta-pashu,' by which the live sacrificial animals came to be substituted by one made of dough; and the feeling against

sacrifices continued to grow till they have been practically suppressed all over India. In those ancient times however, people who did not believe in these bloody sacrifices and rituals were called Nâsṭikas,—such was their strong hold upon the people.

As regards some of the greater sacrifices —*e.g.*, those of Man, Cow and Horse,—attempts have been made from time to time to explain them away and read allegorical meanings in them, instead of the naked truth. All these attempts at bolstering up the marks of the old lower state of morality are very pitiable. Some day perhaps similar attempts will be made to explain the hideous customs of Saṭî and infanticide, —customs which even the spread of education and the strong arm of the British Government have not yet succeeded in stamping out wholly.

Q. 69. What is the meaning of the word Nâsṭika?

A. 69. The word literally means *one who denies the existance (of God)*. But in Hindu literature the word has a much

narrower application. It is applied to one who repudiates the authority of the sacrificial and ritualistic sections of the V e ḍ a s ; and not necessarily to one who denies the existence of God. A fact well brought out by the inclusion of the S â ṅ k h y a and the M î m â ṅ s â philosophies among the Â s ṭ i k a, (as opposed to N â s ṭ i k a) systems ; and this simply because they nominally accept the authority of the V e ḍ a s ; even though they deny the existence of God. The word carries a theological odium with it and is currently used as a term of vile reproach by the so-called orthodox for all those who have the misfortune to differ from them.

Q. 70. What about the V a i s h ṇ a v a s? —they also repudiate the V e ḍ i c sacrifices.

A. 70. In the V e ḍ i c sense of the term, the V a i ṣ h ṇ a v a is as much a N â s ṭ i k a as the J a i n a or the B a u ḍ ḍ h a. He also like the J a i n a lays great stress on A h i ṃ s â, and repudiates the performance of V e ḍ i c Sacrifices. A particular sect of the V a i s h ṇ a v a s, that headed by M a d h v a, has tried to effect a compromise by accepting the authori-

ty of the sacrificial texts, but substituting offerings of grain for those of living animals.

Q. 71. Has our religion undergone any changes, or does it preserve its ancient character, as outlined in the Veḍic Samhiṭâs?

A. 71. We can steadily and unerringly trace the manifold changes that have either suddenly or gradually crept into it, by studying the influence of the Brâhmaṇas, the Upanishads, the Gîṭâs, the Sûṭras, and the Smṛiṭis; every one of these initiated changes and introduced new religious ideas. The Âchâryas of later days, from Shankarâchârya down to Svâmi Ḍayânanḍa, and the numerous intermediate ones like Chaiṭanya, Nânak, Kabîr, Ḍâḍû, Ṭukârâm, Ṭulsi Ḍâs, Sûr Ḍas,—all attempted to adapt the religion to changing conditions. All these may well be called minor avatâras, for wherever there is greatness "that am I", so says Shrî Kṛishṇa in the Bhagvaḍ-Gitâ.

Real creeds continually diverge from no-

minal creeds, and adapt themselves to the ever-changing social and individual requirements of the Jîva, and it is by this power of adaptation that their force over the imaginations and actions of their votaries should be judged. If they were really rigid, they would quickly cease to be a force to be reckoned with. And it is because of its marvellous power of suiting itself to the needs of the times that our religion has continued to exist, in spite of all disintegrating influences whether from inside or outside.

Being thus an active living religion, it has naturally undergone a great many changes, due to various causes, in the long course of ages through which it has existed —some good and wholesome, others bad and injurious. And to meet these ever-changing circumstances, our religious books have been subjected to various editings, and also new works have been composed, from time to time; as the need for meeting those altered circumstances arose, though not always wisely or successfully. Shrî Kṛishṇa has clearly pointed out in the Bhagavaḍ-Gîṭâ that the living Spirit of God cannot

be squeezed and confined within the four corners of any book, however sacred it may be considered. For the world-manifestation is the only true and real Revelation of the Spirit of God, which is ever Becoming but never complete. But through all these changes, we should never lose grip of the fundamental Dharma, that progress is to be attained only by large-hearted charity and genuine sacrifice, and without their vitalising presence, religious forms are but empty shells. A fact always disguised and sought to be suppressed by all those churches which stake their all on some one Revealed Book.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day, and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou O God art more than they."

TENNYSON.

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must ever up and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth."

LOWELL.

PART II.

BASIC RITES AND CUSTOMS OF HINDUISM.

"The past will always win,
A glory from its being far;
And orb into the perfect star,
We saw not when we moved therein."

TENNYSON.

Q. 1. What are the principal rites and customs inherited from our ancestors which distinguish us from men of other religions?

A. 1. (*a*) Samskâra, (*b*) Sandhyâ, (*c*) Shrâḍḍha, (*d*) Shaucha, (*e*) Pañch-mahâ-yajñâ, (*f*) Upâsanâ, (*g*) Varṇa, (*h*) Âshrama and (*i*) Prâyashchiṭṭa, are some of the well recognised customs and rites of Hinduism, and all of which orthodoxy takes it for granted are observed, without making any too minute and unpleasant enquiries which would rend the veil.

Q. 2. What are Samskâras?

A. 2. They are ceremonies performed at

certain periods of a person's life. Their roots lie in the Vedic days, abut 8,000 years ago. It is only comparatively recently however that they have attained their full tropical luxuriance. Their character and methods have been undergoing many changes—different accounts being found in the different Suṭras; and our modern observance again being widely different from these latter. They begin from the time the physical body is about to be built up in the mother's womb, and end with its full maturity. Their purpose generally is to qualify the person born in the Hinḍu fold—*i. e.*, the person on whom the Samskâras have been properly perormed—to gain the privilege of taking part in the social and religious duties and ceremonies suited to his position in life. If he has not undergone these he will be regarded as an out-caste and a pariah and made to feel the terrible pressure of a social boycott.

One exception to this rule is sometimes allowed. It is this. A new-born babe, of any caste or no caste, may be adopted by any Hinḍu; and all the Samskâras of its adop-

tive father's caste are then performed on him.

I am afraid though that the Samskâras have little to do with religion and in their origin are wholly social observances. To take for instance garbhâḍhâna or impregnation, what does a careful study of the mañṭras used on the occassion reveal? As far as one can see there is no trace of religion in them, but instead they are full of obscenity which would not be possible to utter in the vernaculars for very shame. Their safety and holiness lies in their being in a language not understood. Similarly the Sîmañṭoñnyana, or the parting of the hair, was to show publicly by an outward symbol that the woman had fulfilled the reason of her existence by becoming a mother and so to say had become consecrated and was no more a virgin. Take yet again a third, puñsavan or the creating of a male fetus. It consists in the swallowing of many different things resembling a phallus by the pregnant woman accompanied to the tune of many a mumbled incantation in the hope that these would turn into a fleshly phallus and that the babe to be born would be

neither a neuter nor a female but a male! It may be difficult if not impossible for persons who have not assimilated the teachings of Anthropology and still less grasped the Psychology of a crowd and such a crowd as that of the Hindu, which is fairly well-disciplined and well in hand, how such superstitions and absurd practices as those of the Puṅsavana are possible; for his benefit I will quote here a paragraph from Prof. Welton's "The Logical Bases of Education" He says:—"Now it may seem strange that such beliefs have been able to survive for so many generations notwithstanding the continual contradictions they must have received from experience. Indeed, this would be inexplicable were it not for another piece of experience—the fact of the marked conservatism which human nature shows with regard to its beliefs. Prejudice is an enormous force in human life, and not less potent is that mental inertia which makes it hard for men to strike out a new line of thought for themselves. 'It is not error' wrote Turgot, 'which opposes the progress of Truth; it is indolence, obs-

tinacy, the spirit of routine, everything that favours inaction.'" (p. 4)

In India, unfortunately, even to-day, the pressure exerted against any would-be enquirer, if the results of his enquiry and research tend in the least degree against the old established order of things, is so tremendous that few can survive it. While we all glibly assert that thought is free and has been free in India, we utterly refuse to see the vanity and baselessness of this assumption. One might *think* what he liked, but his *utterance* had to be very carefully guarded and his *practice* had invariably to be subordinated on pain of complete boycott, if not actual physical violence.

Q. 3. How many Samskâras are there?

A. 3. The number of Samskâras has gone on gradually being added to, till they have become fifty-two. Of these, ten are generally regarded as important; and of these again two are recognised as of vital importance, *viz.*, Upanayana and Vivâha.

Q. 4. What is Upanayana?

A. 4. It is the ceremony that marks the stage when the irresponsible babyhood and utter freedom of the first seven years of physical existence are put behind. The boy is henceforth an increasingly responsible being, and has the right to study the sacred literature—especially the Veḍas—and has thus the opportunity of discharging one of his three debts, namely that to the Ṛishis. It is generally performed in the eighth year —and the chief feature of it is the taking of the Sâviṭri-Vraṭa, which consists in the vow of Brahmacharya, followed by the initiation into the Gâyaṭri, and the investiture afterwards with the Yajña Sûṭra, which is the outward symbol of the privilege bestowed upon the recipient, of the right to take part in Yajñas, and other religious and social ceremonies. This 'thread' is now-a-days made up of twisted cotton threads only; but in the earlier days it used to be a strip of leather or a piece of cloth. The wearing of this sacrificial, or so-called sacred thread has now become habitual, instead of in sacrificial sessions only. That in

ancient times it was worn only at sacrificial sessions is apparent from certain passages in the Ṭaiṭṭirîya Âraṇyaka, and also from the fact that even the Gṛihya Suṭras do not make any mention of the permanent wearing; this is mentioned only in the later Bhâshyas, chiefly in the Gaḍâḍhara-Bhâshya of Kâṭyâyana's Suṭras. The twisting of the thread over the ear on certain occasions even now-a-days may be regarded as a relic of the ancient habit of hanging it upon a peg after the sacrificial session was over. Now-a-days the ceremony is performed only for boys—unlike the Parsîs who have kept up the older practice—the girls being debarred from it,—for these marriage being regarded as the 'Upanayana'. Here lies the root of the evil which made it possible for the Pandiṭs to twist these texts into applying them as authorities for the proper marriageable age of girls and thus reducing the age to seven! The Ârya Samâjists are trying to revive the older practice by investing girls also. The ceremony has lost a good deal of its original import, and has become merely a formal de-

vice for making the artificial caste-barriers of modern India.

In these days it is becoming a general practice among large sections of the community, who are trying to rise in the caste-scale, to start by donning the thread. In the Panjâb, even the barbers wear it, and, if without it, are not allowed to officiate at ceremonies And quite rightly too. For the barber according to the authority of the Gṛihya Suṭras has to repeat certain Veḍicmanṭras while performing the tonsure. A fact which the narrow minded later have theological writers tried to whittle down.

It would simplify the work of the Kalki Avaṭâra considerably if a great religious leader could arise and invest every one with the thread and initiate him into the Gâyaṭri!

Q. 5. *Is there any other point wherein distinction is made as between a man and a woman merely because of sex?*

A. 5. Yes. The woman has no independent right to perform any religious ceremonies. She is the 'half' of her husband,

and as such, partakes of the result of all that is done by him. When a widow she can perform religious acts, but only with the permission of her son, and not otherwise!

Q. 6. What is Vivâha?

A. 6. It is the ceremony that marks the end of the student stage and the beginning of the life of the world by the boy being married—generally by the parents—to a girl who ought to be four to eight years younger than himself. The proper age for this Saṃskâra is, as Vâgbhata and other medical authorities state, from the twenty-first years upwards for a youth, and for a girl from the seventeenth year upwards. Unfortunately this sensible medical view is wholly ignored and motherhood forced on immature young girls by the overwhelming force of custom throughout the country. It may be asked why this is so, even when the frightful evils of such parentage are recognised, why no stop is put to them? The real but unexpressed reason, one which would even be denied, lies in the deepseated mistrust of woman, all the Smṛitis from

Manu downwards and all the Purâṇas decry the putting of trust in such a frail weak vessel as a woman. So with almost a pathological exaggeration in their views about the observance of chastity, they have ignored every other consideration and doomed the womenkind of India to life-long ill health and misery, when not an early death.

The Agnihoṭra ceremonial may be said to have risen out of this Samskâra. The fire kindled at the marriage alter was not allowed to die out, but was carried home in the front of the returning marriage procession—a practice which would now be utterly condemned and has been given up wholly —and installed in the home with befitting ceremony, and daily worshipped morning and evening by the pair till death, when that fire was used to light the funeral pyre. This practice of sedulously preserving a fire dates probably from those prehistoric times when the people had no knowledge of the means of making a fire, but depended upon jungle fires, the fire-drill being a later invention and lucifer matches quite unknown. The method still in use among the Parsis when starting

a new 'fireplace,' 'agiâri', or when the fire at an old one goes out, throws a flood of light on the method. The fire is collected from neighbouring fires of various kinds and from some dry old tree in a jungle, set ablaze by lightning, and then strained seven times to purify it—by holding seven sieves one above the other, containing seven different and prescribed substances, which catch fire one after the other. The last fire is then said to be pure and is used in the 'fire houses'; agnihoṭra-shâlâs.

The old books describe eight forms of marriage; some of these are so repugnant to modern ideas, that they would land a person in jail, if he practised them. The most approved of these, and the most current in these days, is the 'Brâhma.' In this form of marriage there should be no bartering of either the bride or the bridegroom for money or its equivalent in kind. Unfortunately there is a distinct tendency towards a sordid money-bargaining invading this, the purest form of marriage.

It may as well be pointed out here that

polygamy is an utterly immoral and irreligious practice, and on no account to be countenanced; though this practice was common in ancient India. In those old days this had its use; in-as-much as it helped in the breaking up of the barriers between the Âryan and the Non-Âryan. So long as a man is allowed only one wife, it is only natural that he should choose one from among his own 'colour'; when however he is allowed greater liberty he exercises a wider choice. In the absence of polygamy the antipathy of colour would lead to the most undesirable forms of slavery. To counteract race and colour prejudice Napolean advocated the legalisation of polygamy. The later Hindu law on this point of polygamy is very clear; the first marriage alone is regarded as a sacrament; the later ones, even when the first wife is dead, are not recognised as a S a m s k â r a which is, by its very nature, *obligatory*, while subsequent marriages, even though allowable in certain cases, are at best only K â m y a; but of such K â m y a marriages also the laws do not allow of more than one—as the only ground for permission lies in the necessity of the pre-

sence of the Y a j a m â n a p a ṭ n î at certain sacrifices. Hence it is clear that the indulging in a plurality of wives, who are married only through *desire* and not for Ḍ h a r m a, and who are definitely prohibited from joining their husband in the performance of V e ḍ i c rites is not allowed under any circumstances.

In ancient times, the choosing of brides and bridegrooms was not done by the help of astrology,—a pseudo-science which we learnt from the Chaldeans to our infinite harm; in a fair number of cases they chose each other, in the fashion of the English and Americans, but great care was taken to ascertain the physical and mental capacities of both, and their mutual compatibility and adaptability. Rules on this subject of examining the physical and mental consanguinity and purity of descent have been very strictly laid down by the S m ṛ i ṭ i compilers. This rigid examination of the parties to a marriage is being strongly advocated by European scientists in these days, and forms an integral part of the new science of Eugenics.

It will be seen that the present Hinḍu practice does not recognise a dissolution of marriage, and the remarriage of the woman. The S m ṛ i ṭ i law on the point however is quite clear, being based upon old custom which are recorded in the V e ḍ a s and even the P u r â ṇ a s. Such dissolution is allowed, nay recommended, under certain conditions in no less than seventeen contingencies, one of these is startlingly modern—incompatibility of temper—and the woman allowed freedom to marry again by V e ḍ i c rites. For quotations and proofs in support of the above statement, which is so opposed to modern orthodox practice and belief, the reader is referred to the exhaustive pamphlet of the late Pandit Ishvara Chandra Vidyasagar and the late Mr. Justice Ranade's "Religious and Social Reform." As for the man, he is not hampered in any way either by public opinion or law, rather otherwise, for orthodoxy encourages him to marry and so he has gradually arrogated to himself the right of marrying again and again, and of calling these "unions of desire" marriages—a right which he has denied to the woman. This

does not hold true of the vast number of H i n ḍ u s, who are said to belong to the fourth and fifth castes, and who form an overwhelming majority of the people. Their women, except among some subcastes, are generally free to divorce and remarry, and the heart-breaking question of widow-marriage seldom arises; and this for the simple reason that among these people marriage is regarded as a *contract*, and not a *sacrament*, and naturally there can be no bar to entering into as many *contracts* as one chooses. They freely allow divorces and remarriages of women.

Among the higher castes, who, while permitting the descarding of a wife, do not permit these discarded wives to remarry, and, still worse, do not allow girls even to reach puberty before giving them away in marriage, great abuses arise from old widowers marrying child-wives. These should be discouraged, either by allowing girls to grow up unmarried far beyond puberty—as among some of the highest castes of India; *f. i.* the N â m b u ḍ r i s of M a l a b a r, the S a r a y û p â r î s and K â n y a k u b j a s of

the United Provinces, the Bhûmihârs of Behar, and the Kulîns of Bengal; among whom, sometimes, unmarried women of forty, and even fifty, are to be met with, or, better still, by prohibiting marriages of widowers after a certain age. As marriage has been ruled to be the only Samskâra for girls of every caste, no efforts should be spared to fit them physically, emotionally, morally and intellectually for the duties of motherhood.

Q. 7. Is every Hindu then, bound to get married?

A. 7. Yes. The Smṛiṭis are very clear and definite on this point. No one who has not begotten a child, especially a male one, has fulfilled the purpose of creation, and discharged his debt to the Piṭṛis. In the Ṭaiṭṭirîya Âraṇyaka the Âchârya, when dismissing the pupil after the completion of his studies, imparts this final admonition—"take care that the thread of thy race is not broken." The bachelor orders of Sannyâsîs, Bairâgîs, Udâsîs etc., recruiting their powerful and wealthy orders

by inveigling immature boys—whom not unoften they misuse—into their ranks, are not only a nuisance, from the modern standpoint but are also distinctly prohibited in this Kali-yuga by the Smṛiṭis. Shaṅkarâcharya in one of his Sṭoṭras has truly, though bitterly, remarked that—"growing of hair, shaving it, pulling it out (as the Jainas do), and so on, are only various means of filling the belly: true Vairâgya is a matter of the heart, not of externals."

Q. 8. But is not a life of celibacy necessary for spiritual growth?

A. 8. Not at all. Most of our great spiritual teachers have been married men. It might be interesting to stop to probe the reasons for such a seemingly absurd question. The question never arose in the palmy days of India, when a girl enjoyed the same facilities of liberty and education as her brother, and was not forced into marrying against her own inclinations, and was allowed to choose her husband, as also her own time of marriage and was given a share of her father's property like her brothers if she

decided to remain unmarried and stayed in her father's house. The ordinary answer to the question is so plausible that we shrink from seeing its criminal absurdity. The real reason is that marriage is no longer a widening of the outlook, no more the bringing of the 'lady' of the home. It is merely the satisfaction of the need for physical companionship, and not a union of two mental and spiritual words into one. Marriage instead of being a spur has become a soporific, and we, in our supreme male purblindness have not cared to apply the remedy at the root, and give back to the woman the position she once occupied, but have deluded ourselves by abusing woman as the fount of all evil and keeping her tied down to her present degraded lowly condition as a mere toy for the lordly man.

Q. 9. Tell us something about these Rishis?

A. 9. Originally these Ṛishis were the heads of goṭras (cow-pens), and were *chosen* to this dignity from among the goṭrajas; they were akin to the 'medicine men' of

the American and African tribes of modern days. There were seven G o ṭ r a s at first, each with a Ṛ i ṣ h i as its leader. Later, with multiplying duties, a second head was chosen from among themselves by the g o ṭ r a ǰ a s to assist the chief, his duties being mainly those of protection from outside enemies. This gradually led to a definition of the functions and powers of the two. The first, gradually relinquishing their active functions and confining themselves to the sacrificial and ceremonial portions of their duty, were transformed into B r â h m a ṇ a s i. e. knowers of the ritual, the B r â h m a ṇ a; it is a later and false etymology which would derive the name from the knowledge of the philosopher's B r a h m a n ; while the second, with their following, being freed from ceremonial duties and confined mainly to the defence of these small and scattered colonies, were transformed into K s h a ṭ r i y a s, with great power over the tribe. This in time led to mutual jealousy, as in Sparta between its two joint-kings, and finally quarrels, in which, as usual, the brain won against the body, and the K s h a ṭ-

ṭriyas were subdued and put into the second position, and were left to enjoy in peace their wealth and power, on condition of their submission to the Brâhmaṇas. But before their arrogance was subdued by the Brâhmaṇas, they had succeeded in reducing the citizens of the free republics which had chosen them as heads to a low and dependent position—permanently degrading the people who formed the backbone of these groups, and closing to them all prospects of rise into the *classes* of Kshaṭṛiyas and Brâhmaṇas and degrading them into a third class, that of Vaishyas, thus cutting off the source from which the leaders were drawn, to the steady deterioration of all concerned. This breaking up of the older polity by shortsighted lust of power, and the consequent ever-increasing interdict on intermarriage and interdining, has prevented the people from remaining one Nation and being in the van of civilisation, instead of in the rear, as they are at present. The Ṛishis, thus freed from work in the world, and receiving the highest honour and unquestioning obeisance, made most stringent rules

for their order. These rules were meant to force them to devote their time wholly to the development of their spiritual side and the strengthening of their intellectual powers. Till in modern times the Brâhmaṇa, who is what he is, has come to regard himself as greater than the gods—for are they not subject to Mantras, of which he is the master —and to be so regarded also by the bulk of the population whom he regards as lower than beasts, whose very shadow brings pollution to his sacred person! We need not be surprised at this, for as far as we can discover today, they had acquired and exercised enormous privileges and powers fairly early. Some of these powers and privileges though somewhat in abeyance in the larger part of India still continue to be wielded in something like their pristine splendour in such remote corners of the country as Cochin, Travancore, Nepal &c. To give one instance only of such privileges a passage which occurs towards the end of the Aiṭareya Brâhmaṇa, says that a Purohiṭa is possessed of five destructive powers and only by propitiating each one of these is the Chief helped by him to gain Svarga, the

most coveted object in those days; Desire for Mukti not having yet been born. If these five destructive powers were not propitiated they "burning and blazing" attacked the king and brought about his ruin. The five ways of propitiation were (1) by servile speech, (2) by washing his feet (3) by adorning him (4) by satiating his belly, and finally (5) by welcoming him to his well-stocked seraglio where he was to quench the "burning blazing fire of his Upastha." The modern Hinḍu of the three higher castes preserves traces of this earlier state of things in his daily obeisance to the Goṭra Ṛishis and to their more important descendants or disciples, known as Pravara Ṛishis, at the end of his Sanḍhyâ.

A critical investigation of the many works on Goṭra and Pravara would throw some light on the ancient social relations of the people and their relations to each other and also on the vexed question of caste-barriers. A tentative beginning has been made by the publication of Mr. P. Chentsal Row's "Principles of Pravara and Goṭra" in the Mysore Oriental Series.

Q. 10. What are Shrâddhas?

A. 10. Broadly speaking, they are rites performed with a view to invoke the help of the piṭṛis on occasions of rejoicings or to help on the preṭas to a higher world. The former is called Âbhyuḍayika, or popularly Nânḍi, because of the piṭṛis invoked being known as Nândîmukhas the Joyousfaced. These are performed at the beginning of most ceremonies. The latter is called Preṭa-shrâḍḍha, or Ekoḍḍishta, and is for helping on the Jîva from the moment it leaves the body until it reaches Svarga. Besides these there is the Praṭyâbdika known also as Vârshika, or annual Shrâḍḍha, which though not mentioned in the Sûṭras, has become universal in modern India. It is performed for only three generations of ancestors. There are many other kinds of Shrâḍḍhas; but the details of these need not be gone into here. The Shrâḍḍha was evolved in much the same way and with very similar objects as the calendar of Saints of the Romish and the Positivist Churches. It was meant to produce effects which the study of good biographies does.

It was to be a reminder to a later age of the noble and heroic deeds of its ancestors and to incite it to similar works and make it feel that with such a descent it was ignoble to do anything mean and to pass out of life without any striking and useful achievement. But in these days the original import of the rite has been mostly forgotten, and it has degenerated, specially in Bengal, into a merely social function, and is made the occasion for the most lavish and extravagant expenditure and display, ministering more to the vanity of the performer than to his faith—a thing most distinctly prohibited in works treating of Shrâḍḍhas.

The performance of Shrâḍḍhas is of a comparatively modern growth. Even the word "Shrâḍḍha" does not occur in the Samhiṭâs, nor is there any mention of these ceremonials in the oldest books. Their origin has been traced to an incident described in the Mahabhâraṭa where we meet with the story, that one Nimi performed a certain ceremony on the death of a beloved son, but after the performance doubts arose in the Rishi's mind, and he was torn

with anguish at having performed a ritual *unsanctioned* by the V e ḍ a s, thus becoming a sinner; but he was eventually consoled by other R i ṣ h i s, and the practice gradually gained ground, till it has become what it is these days.

It is worthy of note that its beginning is not to be traced in ancestor-worship, but in descendent "worship" and the first performer after such an act of sin felt so repentent and miserable that he had to be humoured by his brethren before he could regain his lost peace of mind. The practice however is beginning to slowly die out under the triple pressure of English education, of the teachings of religious teachers like Ḍ a y â n a n ḍ a, and more specially, of economic conditions.

Q. 11. Who are the P i ṭ ṛ i s?

A. 11. The answer is enveloped in much obscurity; so much so that M e ḍ h â-ṭ i ṭ h i, the oldest and the most authoritative commentator on M a n u dismisses the whole subject as an 'A r t h a v â d a' (*i. e.* not strictly true), invented for the bolstering up of S h r â ḍ-ḍ h a s. Nowhere in the S a m s k ṛ i ṭ a books

is a clear, definite and uncontradicted statement made as to their nature, number, name and function. There are diverse lists given in different books. They are divided according to caste also, *i. e.* some of the Piṭṛis belong specially to Brâhmaṇas, others to Kshaṭriyas, and so on. But this attempt at creating caste squabbles even among Piṭṛis, like that prevalent in our daily life, is ignored in practice. The followers of each Samhiṭâ, irrespective of their caste, are expected to perform the water-oblation to seven classes of Piṭṛis whose names are given in their Snâna-sûṭra. A large consensus of authority points to there being seven classes of these with many sub-classes—of these, three are Amûrta, formless, and four Mûrṭa, having shapes. Yama is their chief. They are progenitors, physical and non-physical. The physical, or Mânusha-piṭṛis are our ancestors, who have given us physical birth, for whom we perform Preṭa-shrâḍḍhas, and whom we invoke in the Nânḍi-shrâḍḍhas. The non-physical, or Ḍaiva-piṭris, are the Jîvas of the last Kalpa, who

have evolved to this stage, and who in the present Kalpa transmit their several powers to the human being, and make humanity what it is. There are seven classes of these latter, and they are daily offered water at the time of the Sanḍhyâ by every Hinḍu. The Mânusha-piṭṛis are also daily offered water, but generally by those Hinḍus only who have lost their father.

Q. 12. Please name and describe the seven classes of Piṭṛis?

A. 12. The names given here are according to the Kâṭyâyana Snâna-sûṭra. These are (1) Agnishvâṭṭâh, guardians of the east; (2) Barhishadâh, guardians of the south; (3) Âjyapâh, guardians of the west; (4) Somapâh, guardians of the north; (5) Aryamaṭ, guardian of the zenith; (6) Kavyavâdanala, guardian of the nadir; (7) Yamâh, guardians of the shining regions. Others belonging to other Veḍas give other names, though they all agree in making only seven classes.

Q. 13. How do we dispose of the phy-

sical body when the Jîva has left it ?

A. 13. By Cremation. It is the cleanest, healthiest and most effective method for disposing of a dead body; the method that liberates the finer bodies most quickly from the decomposing physical body. Other methods—burial, throwing into running waters, exposure—practiced by diverse races and religions are very unsanitory and repellent and it is only custom that blinds us to their serious demerits. The first two, relics of those early days when cremation had not become such an established factor of Hindu life as at present; are still practiced in the case of Sannyâsis and infants. The last only helps to feed a horde of gruesome vultures. The most hideous method however seems to be that of the Tibetans, who have a class of exceedingly degraded creatures—it would be profanation to call them human beings, known as Ragyabs, whose business it is to cut up the dead and then throw them to the dogs and pigs which abound in Lhassa, and horrible to relate, these pigs are used to feed men, laymen and Lamas alike. (vide, 'Landon's "Lhassa"). In connection with this

last rite, whether for householders or monks, it may be pointed out here, that the smashing in of the skull of the dead, known as the kapâlakṛiyâ is beginning to revolt modern sentiment.

Q. 14. Is it proper to grieve for the dead?

A. 14. No. Tears and lamentations have a disturbing and harmful effect on the Jîva that is passing away: they tend to draw his attention to the physical plane, when he should be looking to the way that lies in front of him. Our attitude, on the contrary, should be one of sober joy at the part-exhaustion of the kârmic debt and enfranchisement of the Jîva from its earthly prison for the happier life of Svarga. We regard death only as sleep prolonged, with this difference, that the Jîva wakes not again in the same physical body. All the after-death rites are supposed to expedite his passage to Svarga.

Q. 15. What is Shaucha?

A. 15. The various methods of keeping the sthûla (physical) sûkshma (subtle)

and k â r a ṇ a (causal) bodies pure, and of so co-ordinating their work that all the three shall work automatically and in full harmony with one another. It is the especial province of Y o g a , but the S m ṛ i t i s, the T a n ṭ r a s, and also the P u r â ṇ a s, deal largely with the subject.

Q. 16. What are the chief rules for preserving the purity and efficiency of the physical body ?

A. 16. They are the rules of regularly bathing and exercising; of the cleanliness and healthiness of surroundings; of abstemiousness in food and drink, coupled with the avoidance of certain vegetables like garlic and onions, of flesh-foods and eggs, and of alchoholic and other drugs, like opium, gâñjâ, bhâng, tobacco, cocaine &c; of occasional fasts, of avoidance of exposure; of the harmfulness of too much medicinal drugging; and of the usefulness of rest to the nerves, the brain and the body, and the harmfulness of worry. The rules given in M a n u on this subject are very usefully supplemented, corrected and expanded in modern books on hygiene, which should be carefully studied along with his.

It is rather unfortunate that hygiene and sacerdotal rules and practices have got mixed up badly in Manu, by which intimate connection the hygienic rules sometimes suffer grieviously. Under the paradoxical guise of purity many dirty practices have been engrafted and it is very difficult to make the bulk of the people realise their filthy character and give them up. For instance it is the very acme of "cleanliness" to besmear one's body with cowdung, and to take one's food on a "table cloth" of dung. To eat cattle dung and drink cow's urine and to besmear one's face and body after bath with "burnt dung" is highly meritorious and sin-removing in its effects!

Q. 17. Why are certain vegetables condemned?

A. 17. Because these vegetables are flesh-like in their effects, in stimulating a man's undesirable passions; and chiefly because of the extremely unpleasant odours their essential oils give out, as shown in the perspiration and breath of people partaking of these vegetables.

Q. 18. Seeing that life can only be supported by the sacrifice of other lives, where is the harm in meat-eating ?

A. 18. The law of economy requires that the lowest forms of life that will support life should be used as food. Besides, the slaughter of animals involves the causing of pain. Pain and disharmony never conduce to the moral and spiritual growth of man. Flesh-food, also, stimulates a man's undesirable passions at the expense of the desirable ones, and thus tends to degrade him. It also degrades and brutalises large numbers of men who have to do the butcher's work. One thing however may be said here : in every community there must be a large number of persons who, for economic reasons at least, are forced to live on a meat-diet ; and for such persons, the sin of giving pain and taking life will obviously be much less than in cases where it is avoidable.

Q. 19. Why should a man abstain from stimulants and the drugs above mentioned ?

A. 19. They not only ruin the moral nature but also the physical body, their

effect upon the finer bodies being specially pernicious. Their habitual use puts back one's chances of spiritual growth, by destroying the organs which bring one into touch with states of superphysical existence. Their use brings social odium and largely diminishes the respectability and helpfulness of the *habitue.* No man who has by means of drugs enfeebled his will should ever be held irresponsible for this wilful destruction of the most important human faculty and no court of law should mete out anything but rigid justice to such creatures, uninfluenced by untimely pleas of " humanity. " Much less should such opium and gânjâ smoking s â d h u s (monks) be regarded as spiritual persons. The people must give up their present atittude of reverance towards such rascals and treat them as blasphemous desecrators of holy things refuse them food and shelter and hound them out of their towns and villages: then only will the nuisance cease.

Q. *20. But is not drinking spirits practised under certain forms of S h a k ṭ i-worship ?*

A. 20. Unfortunately not only drinking

but various forms of obscenity impossible to describe are freely indulged in under the cover of worshipping one of the ten Goddesses, Durgâ, Kâlî, Târâ, Chhinnamasṭâ, &c., and thereby gaining occult powers, Siddhis. Nothing but nervous breakdowns bestiality of character can result from such foul depravity masquerading as religion. Allied to this Shakṭi-worship and proceeding out of it, there is a still deeper depth of degradation namely, the Aghora-panṭha. The man by the time he has qualified himself to become an Aghora-panthî – or Kâpâlika, the name by which he is known in classical samskṛiṭa has completely lost all sense of right and wrong and shame and is no more a human creature but a fearsome and abominable ghoul. He dances in cremation grounds his ornaments are bones his food corpses and excreta and his drinking vessel a human skull. He believes he has become a favorite and an especial disciple of Mahâdeva by mimicking the Puranic descriptions given of Him. What flattery more telling and delicate than that of sincere and wholehearted

imitation ? All the country side is in mortal dread of such a creature and in its pitiable ignorance and fright regards him as a great and a holy being possessed of unimaginable superhuman powers. If these poor simple folk could but once realise that the insufferable creature should be treated to a taste of the lash, tied up to the nearest tree till sense returned into his befogged brain, and not dealt with as a God-like creature possessed of miraculous powers, the country would be spared the sight of such awful and heart-breaking desecration of religion. What could be more deadly in its corruption than that of the highest value applied to meanest ends,

"Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

A life-like description of this hideous nightmare of a creature, his doings and followings is given by Bâṇa in his Harsha-Charitra, a work of the 8th Century A. C. It shows that 1,200 years have wrought no change in the practices of these devils in human shape nor in the attitude, of

the people towards these human hyenas.

This systematic indulgence of foul appetites under the garb of religion and philosophy should be assayed at its true value and no mercy shown to those wretches who practice such abominations. It is for this reason called the Vâma-mârga, the wrong path. Always remember the clear teaching of Shrî Kṛishṇa in the Bhagavaḍ Gîtâ, that nothing which in any way is immoral or brutalising can ever belong to true religion, and that only that person's wisdom is wisdom whose senses are under full control.

There is a second kind of Shakti-worship known as the Dakshiṇa-mârga or the Right-hand path, in contradistinction to the above, but it is very tame and innocuous, all the methods of the Vâma-mârga being used with this important difference that the five Ms—Muḍrâ, Maiṭhuna, Maḍya, Maṭsya and Mânsa —are represented by objects and practices which do not lead to shameful orgies. There is a third kind also, but it is scarcely a worship, for it interprets these five Ms in a Psychological sense, Maiṭhuna for

instance being regarded as the union of the Jîvâṭmâ with the Paramâṭmâ, and is only a branch of the Râja Yoga, having nothing in common with these worships except the fact of having an Ishta-ḍevaṭâ.

The work of Bâṇa above referred to deserves to be much more widely known than it is for the light it throws on the social condition of those days. It would be a revelation to most of our glib preachers of Swarâj, how in those blessed days of Swarâj, *the people* were ground into dust and absolutely no regard paid to their sufferings. The work shows up the sad strange contrast in the magnificience of the Court and the ignoble wretched lives of the people and the inhuman administration. To be locked up in the King's jail was a fate a thousand times worse than swift death. Human life was so cheap and so uncertain that we read of the court nobles murdering people and hawking about the flesh of their victims as a means of warding off the illness of the King, to which he succumbed. Such was the frightful ignorance, superstition and

tyranny of the nobles and priests of pre-Musalman India; what the condition of the people must have been may safely be left to the readers imagination.

Q. 21. What are the chief teachings for preserving the purity of the finer bodies?

A. 21. Whatever sullies the physical body, indirectly sullies the finer ones too; births and deaths of relations, and certain natural functions of the physical body, are said to make the finer bodies impure, for removig this rules of ablution and segregation have been prescribed. But the things which affect the subtler bodies rendering them dark and disorganised, are not these but the riotous flow of passion and the concentration of desires in, and for, the separated self. The steady control of the mind and the cultivation of altruistic emotions, coupled with strenuous efforts to realise them on the physical plane, are the only means of purification we have on these planes. A constant flow of active love can alone wash off the stains which ages of selfish desires have left on the bodies, and

thus render them fit to help the jîva on his onward course.

Q. 22. What is Ashaucha—impurity—and how is it observed?

A. 22. It is an imaginary uncleanliness from which persons are supposed to suffer under certain conditions; the wholly arbitrary and absurd nature of which will be clear from the description given below of its ways of observance and the changes it has undergone from time to time and the different ways in which it is observed in different parts of the country. It is alleged that it began in hygeinic reasons, but, however it may have begun, now it is wholly and purely ceremonial and so far has it travelled from its alleged hygeinic roots that many of these observances definitely promote diseases.

There are three kinds of "impurities," one especial to females only and the two other due to births and deaths of relatives within certain degrees. That due to deaths is ten days for a Brâhmaṇa, twelve days for a Kshaṭriya, fifteen days for a Vaishya and thirty days for a Shûdra. Some of

the later Rishis probably seeing the ludicrous and indefensible nature of this wonderful arrangement and may be stimulated into some sense by an economic disorganisation which must have resulted from the "untouchableness" for such long periods, of indespensible members of Society reduced the period all round to ten days. To farther simplify matters it was laid down that the King never became "impure". It is not clear whether this rule applies to a Queen also; especially, if she be a regnant Queen, there would be especial reasons in her case due to sex and all the more necessary that she should not undergo seclusion every month. The untouchability shows curious divergence of practices; amongst some sections of the people only the chief mourner, the man who has lighted the funeral pyre, is untouchable while the other relatives are only impure; amongst others, the relatives too are untouchable, but no untouchability is maintained with the chief mourner; while in another section, who equally stringently maintain the untouchable character, the chief mourner and the other relatives

both keep apart, and one may not touch the other. The climax of absurdity and sacerdotalism is reached when it is gravely asserted by a Ṛishi that the parents of a girl are "untouchable" for the *whole of their life*, if she has attained her periods before marriage and died in her father's family. (*Vide* Nirṇayasindhu p. 447). We see throughout that the *nature* of the disease causing death is never once in the heads of these Ṛishis, and this ought to dispose of the modern attempts to bolster up these rituals with the help of Western Science. To emphasise the wholly non-medical character of these observances it should not be forgotten that the books lay down that under exceptional circumstances like famines, epidemics, the "untouchability" is removed by mere bathing; just the very occasions when the laws of sanitation require segregation,—(*vide* Nirṇayasindhu p. 470).

With regard to "birth-impurities" the rules are very similar, but have been relaxed very much in practice and even the law-books themselves reflect this laxity of prac-

tice. The relatives are "impure" only and not "untouchable" and little or no restriction attaches about the appearance of these "impure" relatives at formal dinners and their inviting of others to such dinners. In fact it could not be otherwise, as religious ceremonies have to be performed after the child's birth, which would become impossible if rigid "impurity" were imposed. It is only the poor mother who is to be treated as a Pariah and not "touched." This untouchability is limited to ten days amongst some, to thirty days amongst others and forty days amongst still others. While the written law removes her "impurity" and consequeutly the "untouchability" in twenty days if she has become the mother of a boy and in thirty days if she has given birth to a daughter; evidently the poor girl baby, all unconscious, was penalised from her very birth! To make patent the artificial character of all such impositions it only remains to be noted that if the baby dies within this period, all "impurity" ceases at once as if by magic, birth and death have neutralised each other's dreadful conse-

quences. All this is a curious kind of "impurity" not easy to grasp by a lay mind, for the repetition of the Gâyaṭri and the offering of water to the Sun may not be omitted under pains and penalties!

With regard to the monthly impurity of women, it is nothing short of criminal the way in which stringent segregation is imposed upon them. In some parts of the country the girl is sent out of the house and has to spend her three days of martyrdom as a Pariah, untouching and untouched under the shelter of a tree or in an outhouse all by herself, for no one, not even a woman in the same predicament may touch her, each one living separately and by herself. At best an out-of-the-way dirty corner of the house is reserved for such, where food is thrown to her on leaves and earthen pots, which she must destroy forthwith. Seeds of many diseases and of hysteria are laid up in these days which later bear a fruitful crop of lifelong misery. The doctrinaire character of these wretched observances is fully shown when the old law of segregation *throughout* the time of flow has been subver-

ted in favour of a three days quarantine.

Q. 23. What are the five Mahâyajñas?

A. 23 They are:—(1) Brahma-yajña, or Svâḍhyâya, meaning a study of the Veḍas, which as practiced by a few and believed by all simply means the rapid mumbling of the first sentence of each of the four Samhitâs. (2) Deva-yajña, or Homa, consisting of sacrifice to the Ḍevas by means of oblations in fire which in practice and that too with a very few only means the putting of a few mouthfuls of food before beginning to eat, on a few pieces of live charcoal. (3) Piṭṛi-yajña, or Tarpaṇa, *i.e.*, the offering of water to the manes by taking it up in one's palms and pouring it out to the iteration of Manṭras, (4) Bhûṭa-yajña, or Vaishvaḍeva, which consists in the feeding of the lower creatures, with means in practice the putting out of a few pinches of food for the ant, the crow &c., (5) Manushya-yajña, or Aṭiṭhîpûjana, otherwise, hospitality to all comers. Few of these are observed in modern

India, and none as prescribed in the books. The last, it may be noted, has been wholly given up under the present economic conditions, when people are scarcely able to feed themselves, and cannot afford to keep an open house for all comers.

Q. 24. What is Upâsanâ?

A. 24. Upâsanâ is that peculiar kind of intense and purposive worship by which the worshipper tries to get into touch with the object of his worship—a Ḍeva or a Ḍevî—and which finally ends by his identifying himself as being one with the object of the worship and thus merging his consciousness into that of the god or goddess. It often degenerates into unreflecting and intolerant Bhakṭi for some one specialised form of the Godhead leading the Bhakṭa into raising up a forbidding Chinese wall between himself and others who do not follow his favourite cult. It not unoften takes on grotesque and even repellent forms when the male worshippers take on the Nâyikâ, or Sakhî, bhâva towards the object of their worship and regarding themselves as "The

Lord's Mistressess" don woman's garb and play many such other outrageous pranks, which culminate in hysteria and immorality as is too often the case amongst the intense Kṛishṇa worshippers of the Vallabha and Chaiṭanya sects. All such practices have to be recognised as having their true roots in feelings of eroticism and of perverted sexuality developed by immoderate indulgence in the emotion of Bhakṭi unchecked by the balancing force of Jñâna, wisdom. In the very oldest days of Hinduism of which traces can be found now, there were neither temples nor images, these were evolved much later when the higher ethic of a better taught generation would have nothing to do with the fierce and bloody Yajñas—often indecent to the point of filthiness and barbarity—and wanted a humaner ritual and gods on whom love could be lavished instead of beings of great prowess who were to be worshipped in awe with dread in the poor worshipper's heart. The sacrifices disappeared under the gentle Dharma of Mahâvîra and Gauṭama and a pompous ritual of Bhakṭi grew up

to fill the vacant space.

The "heart" of Veḍic Yajña was the offering of meat and drink to the various gods by pouring it in fire which was taken to be their mouth. The ceremonial was complex because the Ṛishis were constantly guarding themselves against any evil by endless uttering of propitiatory Manṭras, lest by some mischance things may go wrong and harm befall them. So in their fear they went on multiplying rituals and also for love of complexity and a desire to keep out "interlopers." Trees, knives, stones, grass, in short everything had to be propitiated before they dared to handle it for their purposes. Even the ground had to be sanctified by the dragging round it of a live frog till it was dead! Later in the ages that composed the Upanishads the Viḍyâs began to take the place of the sacrifices but with the thinking portion, the elect of the community only; these teachings being a close preserve of the higher classes from which the masses were rigidly excluded. These Viḍyâs were "meditations" chiefly on cosmogony and on

the Âtmâ. Still later came the Âgmas: soon after the decline of the protestant religions of the Jina and the Buḍḍha whose philosophy was too dry for the ordinary folk and who had no rituals which these common people could substitute in place of the destroyed Veḍic ritual. These Âgamas started the practice of muttering manṭras sacred to various Ḍevas and Ḍevîs of a post-Veḍic age, and methods of meditation and worship for the purpose of gaining their favour. These earlier Âgamas were followed by others in which the modern temple ritual was elaborated and the many debased and debasing forms of Shiva, Vishṇu and Shakṭi worship established. The ugly images of Jagannâtha, Balabhadra and Subhadrâ, the Phallus (realistic in its representation the farther we go back to its beginnings, and still so in remote corners of India) which is worshipped as Mahâḍeva, the Shâlagrâma which is generally taken to be a stone-pebble but is really a fossil shell of some sea-creature of long ages ago and which is worshipped as a symbolic representation of Vishṇu,

the dreaded hideous goddess K â l i of Bengal are perhaps all legacies from the stone age, bodily transferred and assimilated into Hinduism, and later beautiful, poetic conceits woven round these. For the aborigines would not give them up, and so while the Aryans coalesced with them, their Gods also prudently coalesced with the aboriginal Gods, but only insisted on giving them a less unbecoming *inner* meaning.

In modern practice generally every Hindu male and female and of all the four castes is given what is called a D î k s h â—an initiation—after he has come to years of discretion. It consists in the family G u r û giving an I s h t a-ḍ e v a t â—or especial tutelary deity—and his m a n ṭ r a; selecting them according to well established astrological rules in each case and which the U p â s a k a is not to betray even to her husband or to his wife—but which is a dead secret between the person and the designing G u r u making him such a supreme factor even in such intimate and holy relations of life as that of husband and wife or mother and daughter. The m a n ṭ r a is always

a Tântric one and so is the God who has to be propitiated thenceforward every day by the person so initiated.

Some of the chief features of an Upâsanâ are (a) Prâṇâyâma, regulation of breath, (b) Japa, repetitions of the manṭra and (c) Ḍhyâna, meditation on the particular Deva, his qualities and appearance as described in these books. In modern India as against the old Veḍic practice every act, religious or secular, is begun by an invocation of the blood-colored, pot-bellied, four-handed, elephant-headed and rat-mounted Gaṇesha. Attempts are often made to turn this ludicrous representation into a symbolic one and read allegorical meanings where none exist. All this illustrates once again the fact, often deliberately ignored, that Hinduism has been steadily changing its character from age to age and that to select some one time and its practices and call it Sanâṭana, eternal, is but a pious fraud. It is to-day no longer what it was when the Veḍic Ṛishis lived and chanted their songs, nor is it to-day what it was when these rapidly disappearing songs were col-

lected together and petrified into Samhitâs. To-day it is an agglomeration of everything under heaven and earth, from the acutest philosophy to the most barbarous fetish worship; all shades of the highest ideals coupled with the most degrading practices are enfolded in its all-embracing creeds.

Q. 25. What are Manṭras?

A. 25 A Manṭra is an arrangement of sounds and Svaras, which are believed to be the 'body' of the Ḍevas and the Ḍevîs.

They are of two kinds :—Bîja and Hymn-like. The former represent mere tones, and may well be called "tone-manṭras"; they are by their very nature untranslatable; but the books break even these up into separate syllables and assign meanings to each separate syllable. The Praṇava, for instance, has been broken up into the familiar A. U. M. it has also been broken up into a less known seven-syllable affair. Much unnecessary mystery is made to hang round the Bîja manṭras which are but meaningless and often jaw-breaking combinations of sounds like Hrîm, Shrîm, and some bad

imitations of the inarticulate cries of animals like the goat, the bull &c., as a delicate flattery to the god Shiva who endowed his father-in-law with a goat's head and rides a bull, also to remind the devotee that he is but a Pashû in presence of his Lord, the Pashupaṭi. The only representatives of the second kind are the Veḍic Manṭras, which have been given a definite meaning. They were poems of old days which were utilized as Manṭras by the later compilers—Vyâsas—of the different Samhitâs when their original purpose was forgotten. These may well be called "hymn-manṭras."

We have an immense number of Manṭras of both kinds; but owing to the selfishness and ignorance of the Brâhmaṇas, their use has been degraded into one mass of superstition, fraud and evil-doing.

Q. 26. Which are the most important Manṭras?

A. 26. The Praṇava and the Gâyaṭṛi are the most important Manṭras of each kind.

The Gâyaṭṛî-upâsanâ which is uni-

versal among the three higher castes and all those who aspire to be recognised as Ḍ w i j a s and to be included in one of the three, has latterly also been taken up by non-Ḍ w i j a s and also even by non-Hindus. This M a n-ṭ r a has had a strange history extending as it does to the remotest antiquity of which we preserve any traces. It is a fragment of one of the many floating hymns which later were gathered and embodied in one ill-arranged and confused S a̐m h i t â, which still later was split up into four for the convenience of the different priests, with a view to supplying each with the ritual manual for his own special duties. Even according to European computation this verse cannot be less than eight thousand years old, while the non-critical Hindu fondly cherishes the belief that it has existed from all eternity. By the time the floating hymns came to be gathered together for ritualistic purposes, there original bearings had been forgotten and lost and they came to be utilised haphazard and irrespective of their meanings for different portions of sacrifices. It would have been sacrilegious

to leave any out, for even to these earliest compilers they were representatives of a hoary but ill-understood tradition and were to be preserved and utilised most religiously. This special mantra occurs in the Ṛig, Yajuh, and Sâma Vedas only. The tradition faithfully handed down ascribes it to the great Kshaṭriya King and Ṛishi, Vishvâmiṭra, the great rival of Vasishtha.

It is an invocation to Saviṭâ a golden-bodied minor god of the Vedic age. His special function was inspiration and generation. It means "we meditate on the effulgence of the god Saviṭâ that he may inspire our thoughts." The original verse तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गोदेवस्य धिमहि धियोयोनः प्रचोदयात्। is not even correct metre, being a lame, broken one, though quite simple; neither is the language grandiose, being quite ordinary; one might at least have looked for sublimity of thought, but that too is wanting. But all the same it has continued to exercise an undiminished fascination on the Hindu mind all these thousands of years. It has been the source of their highest aspirations

helping them to attain reaches of thought and ethic undreamt off by the ordinary mortal and as no other Manṭra has ever done.

The history of its earliest usage is that it was used like any other Ṛik on the various occasions at a sacrifice and had no especial or extra reverence attached to it as now. To-day it is the indispensable part of the morning, noon and evening prayers of the Hindu, and must be repeated at least ten times at each such performance. It was only later that the sentence became *the* Manṭra of the Upanayana sacrament. The fiction arose—how it is impossible to determine now—that the union of the Manṭra and the father-initiator resulted in the "birth" of the pupil. It was only an extension of this fiction that made its repetition a purificatory process. The underlying notion being that as the repetition of the verse caused one to be "reborn"; naturally all that had happened before would be wiped off and the man would re-start in life with a so to say clean slate. The old sins would be cast off with the 'old' body, and would not

be able to affect this 'new' body. Probably all this surprising development has resulted from the muddling up of the original notion of Savitâ being a god of generation with later philosophic and yogic ideas.

The old Vedic Sandhyâ was merely a pouring out of water from the joined palms and over which this verse had been muttered in the belief that every drop of the water so consecrated turned into a thunderbolt for the destruction of the Asuras who daily opposed the course of the Sun. Alas! that they should not have been destroyed once for all by this process, but left to revivify day after day, and that this process of psuedo-destruction should have to be repeated endlessly by millions of men child-like in the innocence and simplicity of their faith. Later about two thousand years ago it came about that this Upâsanâ began to take on its present-day shape. The present redaction of the Manu-smriti and some of the earliest portions of the Purâṇas which were promulgated about this period support this view. It is in Manu that we meet with for the first time that the Gâyatri is

to be daily repeated as an integral part of the Sandhyâ. Even here the point of view seems to have been that of a purificatory process; this muttering, so to say, helping to balance one's Kârmiç ledger from day to day by nullifying the action of the previous day's sins and thus giving one each day a fresh start in the race for Swarga unhampered by a load of evil. Perhaps also about this time the feeling arose that by the daily utterance of Gâyaṭṛi the duty of studying the Veḍas, Swâdhyâya, was satisfied. For was not the Gâyaṭṛi the mother of the Veḍas and with such a simple solution the heavy burden of Veḍic studies was beautifully simplified for the vast majority of Hindus, who could not or would not devote their time to such studies. But with the increasing influence of the Ṭanṭras, a great elaboration of the simple Veḍic sandhyâ has taken place, meditations on the three forms of the Gâyaṭṛi-ḍevî have been added, as also on the golden Nârâyaṇa whose dwelling is the Sun and with whom the worshipper is taught to identify himself in the verses of the

Îshopanishaḍ.

Within the last thousand years or so the industry of manufacturing Manṭras has been worked at full pressure, all sorts of Manṭras for every imaginable purpose have been produced. By the simple process of ringing changes on a few words of the old Gâyaṭṛî endless new Gâyaṭṛîs have been created. Even Nandi, the bull; Garuḍa, the eagle; Hanuman, the monkey, and Kâma, the cupid, each being provided with one!

Coming back to the original Gâyaṭṛi and its history, the fact that it is the work of a Kshaṭriya who was at deadly feud with the Brâhmaṇas and that it has completely superceded the Gâyaṭṛî of Vasishtha—for he too had composed verses invoking the god Saviṭâ—becoming *the* Manṭra *par excellence* of every Ḍwija, is a phenomenon worth dwelling upon for a moment. The lesson of such a victory should not be allowed to be forgotten. In those far off times whose memory even has become a dream there existed a mighty Ṛishi named Vasishtha. He

was the embodiment of all that was holy and learned, a very pillar of orthodoxy, the unrivalled champion of the Brâhmaṇas, the sturdy upholder of the *status quo;* the enemy of all innovation. Within his orbit appeared the figure of another equally great and holy if not greater and wiser. It was the figure of the mighty King and Ṛishi Vishvâmiṭra—the upholder of freedom and liberty, the champion of the down-trodden non-Brâhmaṇas. Mighty were the battles waged between the two. Ultimately victory remained with the leader of the progressives and the policy of exclusion and of selfish seclusion and of isolation was trampled down for the time being. We dimly hear the clang of the furious fights as we read these old-world documents and rejoice to learn that even in those days liberalism won and the nation expanded and the champion of dark conservatism was forced to acknowledge Vishvâmiṭra the outsider, as one of his own kith and kin. This old-world story is a type of the eternal dual which is being waged unceasingly between the staunch supporters of a

narrow and bigoted orthodoxy and those who believe in throwing wide-open the gates of the Hall of Brotherhood and of Love. This battle is never won once for all time, the forces of darkness are ever vigilant and their hordes swallow up liberty as soon as there is any slackening of efforts. The fettering influences of selfish sacerdotalism have ever to be watched and their insidious progress choked each time it is born.

I have not dwelt here upon the inspirational side of the uses of the G â y a ṭ ṛ i and of the P ra ṇ a v a, because they are too well known, when rightly utilised, to need more than a passing mention. Even Western Psychology is beginning to realise the truth of some of our Y o g a-teachings and how the mere repetition of one's own name even, for instance, helps to still the restlessness of the mind and the body and throw one into a hypnosis releasing the soul from its physical bondage. People who have honestly tried genuine Y o g a have much to say about states of consciousnesses thus attained. These processes are becoming dimly known to the West, but unfortunately India happens to be

full of spurious Y o g i s, who help only to throw discredit and produce disbelief in the minds of all intelligent enquirers after the truth.

Q. 27. What is V a r ṇ a?

A. 27. The word means color; but it has come to be applied to the four broad divisions or classes of Hindûs, because the theory is that the color of the B r â h - m a ṇ a is white; of the K s h a ṭ r i y a , red; of the V a i s h y a, yellow; of the S h u ḍ r a , black. If this perfectly unmistakable criterion of the caste system had been rigidly adhered to, so that no person who was black could be a B r â h- m a ṇ a and none who were not red could be K s h a ṭ r i y a s, etc. all the evil and heart-burning, civil strife and caste tyranny, would never have come into existence and India would not have fallen a victim to such lamentable degeneracy. The four castes are :— (1) The B r â h m a ṇ a , the man of poverty of pure life and of wisdom. (2) The K ṣ h a- ṭ r i y a, the lord of land, the administrator and protector. (3) The V a i s h y a, the master

of wealth, the producer and distributor of the necessaries and luxuries of life. (4) The S h û ḍ r a, the man of service, on whom the higher castes depend for their bodily support and comfort and whose 'glorious' privilege it is to supply these others with the means of physical living, and thus make possible their life of ease, of luxury and of self-aggrandisement at the expense of the unhappy tillers of the soil – the S h u ḍ r a *par excellence*! Unfortunately this which was regarded by its promulgators as a splendid ideal, was separated by too great a chasm from the actual possibilities of average human nature to ever become the common heritage of the race. In actual practice the result was not far akin to the state of things exemplified in the well-known Hindi proverb—"set a cat to watch the milk."

A critical investigation into the social history of ancient India, as far as existing materials will allow, reveals to us an unhappy state of Society depicted in the S a m-h i t â s and the P u r â ṇ a s. We read of endless dynastic wars for purposes of self-aggrandisement turning the fairland of B h a-

r a t a into a cockpit of contending chieftains, desolating peaceful home-steads and turning the huge country into one vast shambles. Every Hindu admits that the Nation began to decline after the M a h â b h â r a ṭ a war. But I hold that the Nation had begun to fall long before the days of the great Civil War, which was only a well-defined stage in the progress of national decay. The cause of this decay I cannot but believe was due to the existence of the specialised ruling and military caste to whom the possession of power and excitement of war were the only abiding interests of life and the road to honor. Every fresh quarrel, first with the B r â h m a ṇ a s for this possession of power, which they would not and did not after all part with and then amongst themselves, provided employment and advancement and allowed of the free exploitation of the V a i s h y a s and the S h û ḍ r a s in which both the higher castes joined hands, and so the causes for a quarrel were ever actively present. By these unending quarrels peaceful tillage and trade became impossible and the real breadwinners of the nation were starved and enslaved,

which ultimately reacted upon the two higher castes. This disorganisation of Civil life left the country open for wave after wave of foreign conquest to dash over it and submerge its independence finally and totally.

The modern nations of the West are beginning to realise the curse of militarism as centuries ago they realised that of ecclisiasticism and broke its back by the protestant reformation. May this lesson of the ruin of ancient India due to a standing army of priests and a standing army of soldiers prove a warning to all. The four castes were meant to be very much like the Swedish four "estates of the realm," composed of nobles, clergy, burghers, and peasants, on whose harmonious working together depended the life and activity of the realm. Later the two 'higher' castes became more and more parasitical in character and began forming close oligarchies, making class interests paramount as against the good of the whole. The Brâhmaṇa first became the 'medicine man' and later the 'sorcerer' by which terms is to be understood a person

more cunning and less scrupulous and credulous than others, adroit in reaping personal advantages, pretending to exorcise ghosts and devils, destributing all sorts of amulets, bringing rainfall, and helping barren women to get children, and so on. In the earliest days there was no question of higher and lower, consequently no jealousy of the higher and contempt for the lower; it was a case of fitness only. But the intensification of Ahamkâra, due merely to a vanity of descent wholly irrespective of merit—in fact not unoften joined to serious demerits—has produced the fruitful crop of suffering, which we are garnering to-day with unavailing tears and lamentations. Manu's treatment of the whole subject throws a lurid light on the crass ignorance and brutality of the times, as also on the overweening development of pride of power, frightful in its consequences. A person of a lower caste daring to seat himself on a level with a Brâhmaṇa was to be cut in two at the loins; if a Shûḍraḥ happened, even all unconsciously, to hear the Veḍa being recited, molten lead was to be poured into his ears,

a non-Brâhmaṇa keeping a Brâhmaṇa woman was to be made to embrace a redhot iron image of the woman; and so on. Such was the 'humane' treatment meted out to the 'younger brother' as some misguided people love to call these non-Brâhmaṇas, oblivious, blind to the terrible injustice of these old law books, faithful mirrors as they are of those "good old times" and of the fierce antagonism of race and color as patent then as to-day.

The four castes are also said to mark in this world, the four typical stages in the evolution of a Jîva according to the scheme of the universe as imagined by the Ṛishis. But this attempt of some of the modern champions of the system to make it look more presentable and less repellant by quietly ignoring the actual belief on the subject of not only the ignorant millions but even of the Ṛishis and their modern counterpart the Paṇḍiṭs finds no support from the Hinḍu books. Their teachings are dead against it, has already been pointed out on p. 74 in answer to question 52. During the darker days of India's life, caste took on an ever increasingly exclu-

sive and narrow and parasitic character, killing the possibility of a homogeneous nation and absorbing its fair life for its own deadly growth. However, now under the constant stress of modern conditions of life, a re-arrangement according to capacity, irrespective of mere caste or birth, is taking place, and the system is steadily tending to acquire the character which it had in the very earliest days, namely, division of labor, but no division in the life social, no question of high or low according to birth. Trades, professions and occupations are no longer the exclusive monopolies of particular castes. No longer does the fiction of the transmissibility of acquired skill by heredity hamper the individual in his choice of a living. Environment is coming more and more to be recognised as an all-important factor in the struggle for existence, and caste-distinction is giving way before class-distinction, which is arising out of this influence of environment. Similarly the comparatively modern interdict against interdining is gradually relaxing in favour of the liberal rules as practiced even in the days of Manu.

The real line of division in these days between one caste and another and between their numberless subdivisions is the rigid interdict put upon intermarriages. The departure on this point from the old Hindu practice has been most marked; even such late rules as those of Manu allowed a man of the higher castes to take a wife from the lower, the oldest practice of recognised intermarriages *both ways* among the castes being dead long before his days. No account of course is here taken of those numerous unrecognised 'intermarriages' prevalent always in the country where a higher caste woman is living with a man of a lower caste. Sporadic instances of such recognised intermarriages as those between persons of the same caste but different races, or of different castes but the same race, or of different castes and of different races and so on are beginning to occur in British India, showing clearly the trend of the times. The subject of "Connubium" and of "Citizenship" may be farther profitably studied by all those interested in these vital questions, as a factor in national decline in the serious disputes

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which at one time threatened the sturdy life of early Rome, unhappy disputes, which, unlike us, the Roman succeeded in getting over by getting rid of the causes of dispute.

Since the days when the doctrine of caste began to loom large on the horizon of Hinduism, till the days when it grew so huge and insistent as to enfold and concentrate within its inky shroud the whole of Hinduism itself; it seems to have undergone four fairly well defined transformations. In the earliest days when the race was compact and homogeneous and had not scattered and come into contact with other races, there seems to have been no question of caste but only one of profession. No sacrosanct ideas attached to the subject and each one was free to follow the pursuit that best suited his capacity and no questions were asked. Witness the celebrated hymn in the Ṛigveḍa where a Ṛishi describes his mother as being a corn-grinder his father a mender of chariots and himself a singer of Veḍic hymns &c. Similar was the case in old Iran in the time of Zarathushtra. His three sons several-

ly taking up the professions of an agriculturist, a warrior and a priest. By the way may one indulge in a philological guess as to the significance of the name of the prophet of Persia? It seems to be on a par with the Hindu usage of calling any distinguished person a "bull" a "lion" &c. just like the old English usage of naming persons as Wolf this or Wolf that. If this is so then J a r a ṭ (old) and u s h t r a (camel) would signify an "old camel" and s p i t a m may be s p h i ṭ a, fat or prosperous, or s p h u t a, clear. So that the name would signify a fat, or a prosperous, or a clear headed old camel. And as N a r a p u n g a v a is no individual's name so neither is Z a r a t u s h t r a, but only a generic name which by some chance 'stuck' till the real name itself has been forgotten and for all after ages the prophet remained a S p h i t a m, or S p h u t a m J a r a t-u s h t r a.

Coming back to the discussion on the changes, the idea and practice of caste has undergone, we see that the second stage is reached when the self-contained race has grown in numbers and finding the original

home too cramped for their activity begin to scatter. As usual under such circumstances only the young and the vigorous would start from the old home unhampered with families. In the new places they reach they would take the women of the place to wives and being only a small community and wishing to enlarge their numbers they would incorporate the progeny of such unions amongst themselves. Such an action one can see would be forced practically on the small community of colonists and adventurers as a measure of safety, living as they did amidst hostile surroundings. This would be the second stage of the development of the caste idea when emphasis would be placed on the Seed (the man) and not on the Field, (the woman) as Hindu books express it. The third stage was reached when they came into still closer and more friendly contact with larger masses of men in settled and organised communities and to prevent themselves being swamped, the emphasis was transferred from the Seed to the Field. Henceforth the progeny of the union of the conquering race of males

with the women of the conquered belonged to the 'caste' of his or her mother *i. e.*, her race or tribe. We see the process in full swing to-day in Malabar, where the child of the B r â h m a ṇ a by a Nair woman, becomes a Nair. As a matter of fact there is so much of B r â h m a ṇ a blood in the veins of the Nair-s h û ḍ r a, that he might justifiably lay claim to be a B r â h m a ṇ a! At present he wants only to be recognised as a K s h a ṭ r i y a. Finally we come to the fourth the present stage, when each caste and subcaste marries only within itself and no union of sexes other than this is recognised as legal.

It might not be amiss to give here a brief description of the Malabar system of "marriage" as very little is known about it to the outside world, and which has so profoundly affected the condition of the women of that country, so that to-day they *never* become widows and have full economic independence and are perfectly at liberty to "marry" or not. In fact they have got all the rights and privileges for which the western woman is hankering and fighting for

—and even more.

The highest caste in Malabar or Kerala as the inhabitants love to call their country is the Nâmbudri Brâhmaṇa—all the other Brâhmaṇas throughout India rank a good deal lower in his estimation. After this comes the caste to which the Râjas belong and is known as the Ṭhiruvapâḍ, much lower down come the bright, intelligent, energetic Nairs. There are still deeper depths of degradation in the caste scale, but they have not been quite fully sounded even by the omnivorous Census reports. Outside of the Nâmbudri and the ordinary members of the Ṭhiruvapâḍ caste there is no marriage as we understand the word. Amongst the Nâmbuḍris however only the eldest son marries and he is polygamous. This makes it possible for all the girls of the caste to be provided with a husband. He inherits the family property to the exclusion of his other brothers and sisters. For they are governed by the law of primogeniture, which has helped to perpetuate the family wealth, power and prestige. Among the Nairs the woman "marries" and "owns" the husband and not the other way

as in the rest of the world. She generally prefers to have a "sacred" N â m b u d r i as a "husband" than a man of her own low caste. She regards it as a great honour. She provides for the children and they belong to her own caste. This is the way in which all the unmarried N â m b u ḍ r i s are provided with women. They are at perfect liberty to give up one woman and take to another or even to have two or three at a time. Similarly the woman can change her man. All this is easy and possible because of her economic independence due to the peculiar law of inheritance prevalent amongst them.

The power of these N â m b u ḍ r i s is only fully realised when one studies their relation to the Râjas and their families. How they have worked on the ignorance and inherited prejudices of ages to consolidate and keep supreme this power and position in the country is revealed only then. The present day N â m b u ḍ r i is usually an ignorant creature, not even knowing S a m s k ṛ i t a, much less English; as for travel, none have gone beyond the limits of Malabar. Like the Sultans of Turkey the Râjas of Cochin and

Travancore do not marry—nor do the other members of their family—like the average castefolk of these chiefs who do marry in proper style. The Travancore Maharaja takes a Nair woman to be his "wife"—who is kept in seclusion, similarly the Cochin Raja takes a "wife" from among the Nairs but she is not secluded. These ladies are not to be confounded with the R â n i s or M a h â-r â n i s, who are the sisters of these Chiefs and not their 'wives.' About this question of seclusion of women—the Nair women are of course not g o s h â. The only g o s h â women being the N â m b u ḍ r i s, but it is a curious kind of p a r d â—not unlike that practised among the Kashmiri P a n d i ṭ s whose women observe no purda among their own caste—the women appearing freely before all the men of their own caste, while hiding behind huge umbrellas before others, or when they have occasion to go out. This peculiar z e n a n a-system seems to be almost tribal in its origin where the women have to be preserved from the inroads of men of other and possibly hostile tribes. The children born merge in the Nair caste, the sons having Nair "wife's" and the daughters

N â m b u ḍ r i " husband's." But though both the Rajas belong to the same caste they will not interdine, because the Cochin Raja prides himself on being higher in the scale than his brother of Travancore. Here is the reason for it, which must sound more than strange to uninitiated ears. While the niece of the Travancore Maharaja is married properly to one of her own caste and it is the son by this marriage that succeeds, the practice in Cochin is that the niece is "married" to a N â m b u ḍ r i and not married to one of her own caste, hence the children are regarded as higher in the caste scale. The law of Nepotism literally rules the country. Fuller details of all these customs are to be found in a small book by Gopal Panniker "The Malabar and its Folk" and in the Malabar Marriage Commission Report, as also the various Census Reports of the two Native States.

Historically speaking the present-day S h û ḍ r a is the descendant of the early indigenous priests, rulers and tillers of the land, as the p a r i a h is the representative of a still earlier layer of conquest. As the land

and its peoples came more and more under the control of the Aryan immigrants, they lost not only all their independence, but also their high status, by the imposition of the caste-system and the loss of their lands and cattle and were finally reduced to serfdom by their pitiless invaders.

It will be useful for us to remember that, while we rightly object to the word 'Native' in the way it is applied to us by the Englishman of 'tiger qualities' as the *Pioneer* lovingly delineates him and calls upon us to worship him and fear him,—we too of the 'higher' castes must forbear from the use of the words 'S h û ḍ r a' and 'C h â ṇ d â l a,' which convey a deeper contempt and greater hatred than 'Native.' After a wellnigh thousand years of foreign domination, our egotism has not become mellowed; small blame then to the unphilosophic rulers of to-day, if they have failed to subdue the expression of their pride.

As a matter of fact, at the present day, the sober truth is, that all caste-distinctions have disappeared to give place to one universal caste, that of the pedlar and the

huckster. We may, in our idiocy, continue to take pride in our splendid ancestry and lovingly trace our descent from the Great Prajâpati, through Vashishtha and Angiras, or from the Sun and the Moon, through Manu and Purûravas; but in point of fact, we are but the non-productive 'Bania,' the wretched middleman,—(as the Samskṛita Shloka rightly but bitterly depicts—सर्वे वणिग्वृत्तय:),—who barters away his birth-right for the flesh pots of the Egyptians, which too, alas! he but seldom gets. (For details of modern research into this thorny subject of caste. See the Census Report Part I of 1901).

Q. 28. What about a fifth, the panchama, caste, about which we hear so much in these days?

A. 28. There is no mention in our sacred literature of a fifth caste. But there is a large number of peoples who have not yet come definitely within the Hindu social organisation; mostly because of their total disregard of the rules as to cleanliness and purity, diet and drink, their eating of cows

and pigs and dogs, and even carrion, and getting shamelessly drunk; a few among these degraded people have risen, and have been recognised as saints by us because of the holy and spiritual lives of great power led by them. But these tribes or castes can only hope to rise in the social scale by giving up these ugly un-Hinḍu practices, and by persistently educating themselves. The term P a n c h a m a is however a convenient one to designate these various degraded and backward peoples, subserving a distinct purpose of welding them into one; it has been accepted by the British Government, and is daily becoming more popular.

We owe a distinct duty to these fallen peoples. For their present degraded and helpless condition is mostly due to our conquering ancestors and it should be our duty and our pride to undo, as far as we may, the wrong inflicted on these hapless peoples. Not until we help to shatter the fetters that bind these poor wretches, socially and intellectually, in the different Provinces of India, is there a chance of our blossoming out into a great, powerful and homogeneous nation,

like the holy lotus flower of our sacred land from the primeval slime. We ought to take a lesson from the Japanese, whom we have become so fond of always quoting and admiring, with regard to this question. The Emperor with the willing consent of all his subjects has abolished all legal and social differences and disabilities that pressed so heavily on the lower castes, so that to-day they all stand as *one*. Are we, the admirers of Modern Japan, prepared to do as much, and carry out in actual life the teachings we admire so much, or are we to continue paying mere hollow lip-service as of yore, and never stirring a finger?

We have attuned our conscience to the touch of the fierce Musalmân; we have again attuned it to the touch of the conquering Christian. It is time now to attune it to the touch of the C h â n d â l a. Let us beware, while there is yet time, lest the poor despised Pariahs learn the all too-fatal lesson, that their salvation lies only through wholesale conversions to the religion of their present-day rulers.

Q. 29. Is there any basis in nature for

this distinction into castes?

A. 29. None whatsoever. If there had been any, then the children of mixed unions would have shown as marked physical and mental characteristics as the hybrids in the animal kingdom do. That nature does not justify any such distinction is proved by the fact that she does its best to give a fair start to every being that it brings into existence. All childern, at birth, are almost equally endowed with natural powers and faculties. It is the environment that is chiefly to blame for stunted and anemic growths. For instance, if the food-problem were solved in the proper manner, and all mothers given the proper training for nursing children, not a hundredth part of the evil that we witness in the world would remain. Well-fed and well-cared-for infants would grow up into healthy adults with instincts unperverted, and able and willing to perform all the duties of their life, instead of being perverse creatures, physically, mentally and morally, unable to form rational views of life, or to behave themselves decently. That all distinctions were originally attempted to be

based upon the qualities manifested by the man in his actions in the world under circumstances peculiar to his case, is proved by the declaration of Kṛishṇa in the Bhagavadgîtâ that the 'four castes' were divided in accordance with the qualities and actions of men. Our environments are being changed for us, no matter whether or not we want the change; and these are producing their inevitable result in a changed outlook of the world: the Purohîṭa's son does not believe in becoming a Prohiṭa in his turn; he goes in for Law, and ends as a High Court Judge or a Viceregal Councillor. The spirit of barter has come over the Nation as a whole, and the first question that presents itself before everyone is—'what will be my gain?'

Q. 30. How do you account for the endless sub-castes that we meet with in the India of to-day?

A. 30. The old Hindu legists speak of the ancient aboriginal people as the offspring of those Âryans who had broken through the strict marriage law laid down by them: and each ethnic group was given some such fanciful genealogy as that, for instancc, which

Manu gives for the Ambashtha. These fanciful genealogies are on a par with the history of creation where from one Rishî and his two wives all sorts of human and non-human beings are said to have been born. One can only believe that all this wonderful anthropological derivation had some ulterior motive to serve and was not mere fancy. We may dimly sense how this treatment of the conquered races was tried to be forced on the powerful neighbouring races, and had to be modified by enfolding them within the system itself, their own priests becoming their 'Brâhmaṇas' and so forth. This ethnic distinction is at the root of the sub-caste system of modern India.

Q. 31. What is an Âshrama?

A. 31. Âshrama means a resting place, it is a stage on life's many journies. There are four such stages, each having a duration of twenty-five years. The first is that of the student or Brahmachâri, which *ends* by marriage and not as at present when often it commences *after* marriage; second that of the householder, or Gṛihasṭha, in which he must marry and have children, and follow

one or other of the various avocations of life recognised as *proper*; third, that of a hermit or V â n a p r a s ṭ h a, when a man must, on the birth of a grandson, make over all his property and business to his sons, and retire with his wife into solitude, retaining just enough means of livelihood to be above mendicancy, for the purpose of giving his undivided attention to religious and altruistic works; fourth, that of an ascetic or S a n n y â s î, in which complete renunciation of the active life of the world, both physical and mental, is enjoined, coupled with a whole-hearted devotion to the higher spiritual life.

In these days, however, there is unfortunately no proper observance of B r a h m a c h a r y a. The whole ceremony of U p a n a y a n a has been reduced to a farce, by marriage taking place almost simultaneously with the vow of B r a h m a c h a r y a. This it is that is sapping the vitality of our nation. Of V â n a p r a s ṭ h a also there is hardly any observance, even though this latter is the most suited to modern conditions of spiritual development.

When the two words 'Varṇa' and 'Âshrama' are used together as a compound word 'Varṇâshrama,' the meaning becomes entirely different: it means the Ḍharma of the person of the particular caste at the particular stage; for instance, the Ḍaṇḍa of the Brâhamaṇa is to be of Palâsha, and so forth. The word is wrongly used in the Advanced Text-book of Hindu Religion issued by the Central Hindu College, Benares.

Q. 32. Who is qualified to enter the fourth Ashrama?

A. 32. Ordinarily he only who has passed through the previous three stages; but even this is forbidden in the Kaliyuga, and rightly so; for owing to economical and sexual demoralisation, due to the large bodies of persons (the number of Sâḍhus returned by the census of 1901 is 52 lakhs) who have adopted this mode of life, not because of the impellings of a true and lasting Vairâgya, but out of manifold selfishnesses, it is condemned by all right-thinking and truly religious persons.

The theory of the "stages" is that each later one is to be reached only by passing through the previous one and there are to be no "frogjumps" over the intervening ones. Exceptions to this rule are of course permitted, but in exceedingly rare cases, for the conditions laid down in the books for such deviations are so stringent, and rightly so, that few can satisfy them. Unfortunately however, since a long time these wise precautions have been systematically disregarded and every fellow who is too worthless to be a good citizen, shirks his civil duties and forthwith dons the ochre-colored robe thus becoming M u k ṭ a, free—to live in luxury and vice at the expense of his better but more credulous fellow-citizens.

Q. 33. What is P r â y a s h ç h i ṭ ṭ a?

A. 33. This is a cardinal doctrine of the Hindu faith—in fact of every creed — that whatever ceremonials ordained by the particular religion have to be done, and done in a peculiar way, or not to be done at all; have not been done, or done wrongly, must always be atoned for by performing the prescribed penances; and this is what is known as doing

Prâyashchiṭṭa. Where the ingenuity of the priest has failed to imagine some transgression and prescribe its proper penance, rules are given by which a fitting penance could always be deduced. It is this doctrine which has preserved the continuity of the Hindu religion by its ubiquitous presence and far-reaching results. But for this, every transgression would have resulted in an irreparable breach, which would have gone on widening continuously, resulting in the ultimate dispersal of the rather loosely-jointed fabric of Hindu Polity. The institution, as was but too natural, has been most grossly abused. Its workers have always been priests. It is they alone who derive monetary and other advantages from its working, so it has been made to subserve their ends as against the righteousness of the occasion. It was and is in fact such a concentration of powers in the same hand which tyrannies only can tolerate. The functions of the Policeman, the Magistrate and the beneficiary of the fine are all combined in one person; there can be no escape and the unfortunate victim is heavily mulcted. It

is the canonical penal system, brought into being when living religion is petrifying into dead creeds and formularies, and requires such external aids to prop up the decaying faith. Its heart is non-progression, blind conservation, yet, with the tremendous amount of energy locked up in it, owing to the unlimited faith a vast majority of Hindus repose in it, it could be made into a powerful lever for the progress of India, if only the custodians of the power could be made honest enough to use it rightly. As an instance, in the right direction, the Vrâṭyasṭôma Prâyashchiṭṭa may be mentioned here. It is fully described in the Ṭândya Brâhmaṇa. It was a fiction invented by the Ṛishis of old India, who unlike their later descendents were not blind to the actualities of life, for the preservation and spread, of their hard-won culture among the non-Âryan tribes among whom they came to dwell. It was something like the old Roman system, which under certain conditions granted the privileges of Roman citizenship to non-Romans—thus assimilating them and turning but too probable enemies into staunch sup-

porters. The inability of our immediate ancestors to understand its tremendous significance and their virtual repudiation of it, has provided us with an unenviable legacy in the huge masses of Musalmân populations in Kashmîr, in Sindh, in Eastern Bengal, and other large tracts of India. Be it said to the honor of Ḍayânanḍ Saraswaṭi, that he alone among our recent leaders had the prescience and courage to face the problem squarely, and reinaugurate the old rite of 'Shuḍḍhi.' The problem was forced on the late Maharaja Ranavira Simha of Kashmir by his soldiers being taken prisoners by the Musalman frontiersmen and forcibly converted to Islam; this struck such terror amongst them that they began to regard frontier duty as worse than death, till the Maharaja made arrangements to have them readmitted into caste. His Pandits found from the Shâsṭras, the requisite Prâyashchiṭṭa for the readmision of converts, which was incorporated into the Ḍharmashâsṭra digest compiled by the order of the Maharaja. Without this ability of expansion through the power of

absorption, the life of no nation, however powerful for the time being, can be indefinitely prolonged. Such a narrow and isolated life is foredoomed to early decay.

Q. 34. Tell us something about Vraṭas, (fasts) Uṭsavas (festivals) and Yâṭrâs (pilgrimages).

A. 34. We have an enormous number of fasts—though nothing like those the Jainas have, either in numbers or severity; they have carried these to almost scientific perfection. The fasts most in vogue with us are the fortnightly Ekâḍashi, and many special ones like the Shivarâṭri. The most important festivals are the Vijaya-ḍashami, the Dîpamâlikâ, the Râma-navami, the Krîshṇa-janmâshtamî, the Makarasankrânti, the Holi, the Ṭîj, the Ganagaur, the Vasanṭa-panchamî, &c. We have numerous pilgrimages. The most important ones are to Baḍari, Keḍâra, Râmeshvara, Jagannâṭha, Prayâga, Kâshi, Ḍwârakâ and Maṭhurâ.

Q. 35. You have said nothing about the prevelant worship of trees, animals &c.

A. 35. I have said nothing about the wor-

ship of trees (Vata, Shami, Bilva, Ashvaṭṭha, Ruḍrâksha, Tulasi &c) snakes, monkeys, cows, crocodiles, &c., because it is no part either of Veḍic or Smârṭa Ḍharma. It is mere popular and degraded Hinduism. Similar is the nature of the sacredness attaching to crows, though the Shrâḍḍha ritual prescribes their feeding with proper rites—not because, as some otherwise well-instructed people say, they have supernatural vision and see the ghosts of the dead, but as the books say the Piṭṛis take that shape when coming to take the offerings. Another instance not laid down in any suṭra is that drinking cow's urine,—to the Parsi it is the bull's urine that is sacred—is a religious act. We see how much mischief this causes when monkeys who cause many human deaths every year and are an unmitigated nuisance, being identified with Hanumân, are fed and worshipped instead of being cleared out. Similarly again the squeamishness against the destruction of rats, who only serve to destroy food-grains and dwelling-houses and disseminate plague, causes endless waste and suffering. For are they not the vâhan of

Gaṇesha and therefore sacred? When a pipal tree grows on a house, it is difficult to prevent the house becoming a ruin, for only the very lowest caste, a chamâr, could be had who would undertake such a sacrilegious act as the cutting down of the "sacred" tree of Mahâdeva. It may be quite right that an agricultural country should worship cattle, but unfortunately the poor things do not escape exceedingly bad treatment habitually dealt out to them by their worshippers notwithstanding their "sacredness". Decency and commonsense, even self-interest do not always form part of the creed of the average Hindu, much to his harm.

Q. 36. There are many other rites and customs which are regarded as being as important as those above described; how are we to regard them?

A. 36. During the long ages through which our religion has existed, ancient rites and customs have changed to a large extent; and many not contemplated by the ancient Ṛishis have crept in and acquired a pseudo-religious sanction. The general causes of

the changes have been: intermixture and contact with other races, variations of the climatic conditions and the physical features of the different parts of the country, local civilisation and degeneration on different lines, as empires rose and fell in the different parts of India, and so on. As a general rule, any rite or custom that is not found everywhere in our land cannot be an integral part of Hinḍuism. Out of hundreds the following pseudo-religious institutions may be mentioned here as instances of the non-essential, however strongly local prejudice may support them,—different styles of hair-dressing, from no cropping down to clean-shaving of the whole or parts only of the body; smoking and meat-eating by Brâhmaṇas; non-smoking, as among Sikhs and Maiṭhilas; different styles of male and female dress; the parḍâ system, or shutting up of women; the wearing of a silk cloth during meals; Mangalasuṭra, or ṭâli, round the neck, a silver ornament on the ankle or toe, an iron or glass ring round the wrist as necessary signs of Suvâsinî; the obligation on men and women to wear,

or not to wear, kachha; to cover the head or otherwise among women; going on sea-voyages, long and short; questions of inter-dining or otherwise; festivals not universally observed. These cannot be Hinduism, or Sanâṭana Ḍharma, in any sense of the word.

It is not generally realised that a good many of these different and differing practices are also due to the successive layers of Aryan imigration into the different parts of India, and have their root in the very earliest days. To take one instance. Like the Hebrews we too literally have our Shîb-boleth. The northern Hindus—the Pañch gaudas—prononnce य and ष as Ja and Kha, while the Southern Hindus—the Pañch-ḍrâvidas pronounce them as Ya and Sha. This persistent difference in pronunciation is not a recent one but comes down from the very earliest days, when the progenitors of these two sections were evidently distinct tribes, and to this fact must be traced many a practice which, though they both believe in the same books, is abhorred by the one while followed by the other.

The two streams of migration met each other possibly so late that attrition had not time to reduce the differences and angles. This distinction still lingers on in Afghanistan, where one tribe pronounces P a *k h* t o while another pronounces the same word as P a *s h*-t o; their conversion to Islam apparently having had no influence over the old tradition. This fact that in the ancient days, all those countries—Afghanistan, Turkistan, Baluchistan, Khiva, Bokhara etc., were Hindu and ruled by Hindu Chiefs is lost sight of by the modern Hindu, as were also Java, Sumatra, Siam etc., and this was a potent factor in the marvellous spread of Buddhism into all those countries. The religion had not to step across the political boundaries of Hindu dominion. Should not this glorious past spur us to throw off our sloth and our evil habits and practices and to thrust back the decay that inexorable Nature has in store for all laggards and regain our ancient greatness and self-respect and rise once more in the scale of Nations? But this greatness is not to be achieved in a day or by violent or criminal methods; nor is

it to be gained by newer and more catching shibboleths which only help to farther sub-divide the already overdivided country into rival and hostile camps. If self-respect is not to be mere sham and vanity it must be based on sobriety of judgment born of a critical and accurate knowledge of history and of methods of investigation and of the laws of evidence. The possession of a sterling character therefore is absolutely necessary in each individual composing the Nation. For without it there will not be the requisite strength which takes the man straight to the goal which his well-trained and keen vision has percieved in the far distance.

> "The world advances, and in time out-grows
> The laws that in our fathers' days were best;
> And doubtless after us, some purer scheme
> Will be shaped out by wiser men than we,
> Made wiser by the steady growth of truth."
>
> LOWELL.

PART III.

Hindu Ethics.

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि यदुक्तं ग्रन्थ कोटिभिः ।
परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय पर पीडनम् ॥

व्यास.

Q. 1. What is Ethics?

A. 1. Ethics is the method of self-realisation; it is the science of duty; the art of harmonious relations. It tells us what we should do, and what we should not do, in relation to ourselves and in relation to other living beings generally.

Q. 2. Are the ethical teachings of Hinduism different from those of other religions?

A. 2. Unlike some ethical systems, like those of China and Japan for instance, our ethics is bound up with our religion. The ethical teachings of all those civilised peoples with whom it forms an integral part of their

religion are fundamentally alike, but our ethics is fuller and has a broader and firmer base, in that it takes note of certain important facts and laws of nature not so expressly recognised by some of the other religions; namely: (1) the law of Karma (2) the law of Evolution of the individual Jîva through a series of births in this and other worlds; (3) the relation between the Higher Ego, the evolving individual, and the Upâḍhis in and through which the Higher Ego manifests and evolves; (4) The relation of the Jîvâṭmâ to the Paramâṭmâ. Hence the practical side of Hinḍu ethics has never been regarded as fixed or absolute—herein lies its greatest difference from other systems of conduct—but has been constantly readjusted to the varying needs and expanding ideals of growing humanity, though the basic notion of duty has ever been the same. And this is the real meaning of the famous but mostly ill understood teaching of Shrî Kṛishṇa about the Ḍharma of *another* being dangerous. It simply means that in so far as one has failed to adapt one's self to changed circumstances, and continues to

act up to the duties of a previous surrounding, he has *failed.* In sticking to the duties of a bygone Ḍharma a person has been performing *another's* Ḍharma. As to why 'another's Ḍharma' is 'dangerous' an explanation is afforded by Manu—सर्वम्पर-वशं दुःखं सर्वमात्मवशं सुखम' ('*Bondage to another* is a source of pain, while *bondage to the Self—i. e.,* the always taking into account of the environment into which the Jîva is put—leads to happiness')—which means that what does not suit the nature, the time and the environment of the Jîva is not conducive to his *happiness,* and as such cannot be his 'Ḍharma'; this 'Ḍharma' consists in taking a true and historical view of life and its surroundings, and not being biassed by the preconceptions of an effete past, and of an irrational and unthinking conservation. It is a sin to believe that such great and far-seeing persons could ever have taught doctrines which end in petrifaction and race-suicide.

Q. 3. What is the basic duty of man?

A. 3. The basic duty of man is deter-

mined by the basic need of his nature. That is "happiness." While every one may have his own special way of defining what he regards as "happiness," there is no doubt that every one is agreed that the aim of all life is perfect happiness, the greatest good—apavarga; nishshreyas. The prime duty of man therefore is to secure the highest happiness.

Q. 4. What is the highest happiness?

A. 4. On analysis, we find that the "Expansion of the self" is happiness. The greatest expansion is therefore the highest happiness. The realisation of one's self as identical with the Universal Self is the greatest expansion possible, and therefore the highest happiness. From this it evidently follows that happiness is not a thing which one human being can secure as a separate possession all for himself. In strict theory, one is happy only when all are happy; but because that is not possible in limited space and time, therefore the endeavor to secure the happiness of all that are within one's reach is the basic duty of

man. This endeavour is obviously most successful when we strive after the higher, *i. e.* the more permanent, joys rather than the lower, *i. e.* the more fleeting. And this is brought about by the constant regulation of our inner life of thought and our outer life of action. The embodiment of this is the 'golden rule:' "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you"—a precept found in Hinduism long before Christianity came into the world.

Q. 5. *What is meant by the regulation of our outer and inner lives?*

A. 5. Thought and action act and react upon each other all through life. The starting point of the inner life, or that of thought, for each incarnation, is the inherited character of the individual, *i. e.* the tendencies he has brought with him from his past lives. The outer life, that of action, is conditioned by the environment of his life, which also is the result of our past K a r m a. These tendencies are mostly of a mixed nature, neither wholly good nor wholly bad. Now our duty is to carefully study these tendencies, and

discriminate between those which help and those which hinder. The former should be strengthened to the best of our capacity, and the latter suppressed as far as possible. As regards the circumstances of life in which we find ourselves, we must, it goes without saying, utilise them to the utmost when favorable, for the realisation of our ideals of good; but when unfavorable we must strenuously struggle against them, even though at times the struggle may seem hopeless; a nerveless collapse under difficulties, a supine passivity bred out of fatalism, will only create for us more and more difficult circumstances in future lives and make it all the harder to learn the great lesson that the only function of difficulty and opposition is to draw out the energies of the Jîva. We evolve only in so far as we rise above our circumstances and master them.

Q. 6. Why should we do so?

A. 6. Evolution, or the constant rising to higher and higher conditions of life, is the law of the Universe, the Will of Îshvara. If

we work with this law, and constantly strive to bring our best energies to bear on raising others and ourselves along with them, we live and grow. If we are inactive and allow ourselves to drift at the mercy of circumstances, we degenerate and lag behind in the onward march of evolution. If we hang back, if we resist, we suffer to the extent of our resistance. If we persistently set ourselves against this great law we are destroyed. It is not by the repression of 'passion,' of activity, that man is exalted, but by their right exciting. Ever keeping in mind this immutable law of evolution, of persistent growth, of steady progress, of everlasting change, we should never allow the virtues of one stage and one generation to become the fetters of the next. This law applies equally to the individual and to the race.

Q. 7. How can we distinguish the lower from the higher tendencies?

A. 7. The higher tendencies prompt us to realise those joys of life which result from the constant widening of our sphere of activities, and the working out unrestrict-

-edly of our best capabilities. The higher joys are not fleeting, they do not enslave us, they do not make us feel a sense of self-degradation; are capable of infinite variation and will not induce satiety; they do not bring about a diminution of our power of self-control, while the satisfaction they give us is intense. They are characterised by their power to restrain the spontaneous manifestation of the lower joys. They flow from the culture and harmonious development of all our s h a r î r a s, and from actions that tend to bring about the gradual elevation of the whole human race. They are not born of the feeling of "touch," like the lower ones which lead to pain. The lower joys, on the other hand, are mostly born of a feeling of "touch," have a sameness that speedily induces satiety; they are transitroy, they enslave, they degrade, they destroy the power of self-control. The undue hankering after these is generally due to one-sided growth, for instance, a well-grown physical body with a neglected intellect and heart; great intellect but an ill-regulated heart and an ill-developed body;

or yet again an impulsive enthusiastic nature without the will to do the right thing at the right moment, and without the wisdom to know what is good and feasible and what is not. The lower joys mostly arise out of selfish desires and ambitions, which ignore the fact that mankind is one and its life is truly a manifestation of the life of Îshvara; and aim at taking from the world all that it has to give without trying to make any adequate recompense, or otherwise repay the pleasure which we derive from appropriating things of the world. The higher the tendency, the wider the circle within which the resulting joy can be shared. The lower the tendency the narrower the circle within which it can be shared. The higher always leads to union; the lower as inevitably to disunion.

Q. 8. Please give a few examples of this struggle of the higher and lower tendencies in our daily life.

A. 8. Lazy inaction is immediately pleasant; but gradually ruins one's health. Physical exercise is painful in the beginning,

but makes one's life efficient and pleasant; sensual pleasure is immediate but fleeting, while intellectual pleasure, though not immediately pleasurable, is longer lasting, and intense. Sitting in meditation and compelling the brain to work in a particular groove is painful, as compared with the joy of abandoning oneself to a train of unconnected musings, but it organises the subtle bodies and makes them more useful instruments for the jîva. When a man retires from worldly life, it is pleasant to enjoy what he calls a "well-earned rest"; but if he uses his experience and leisure and freedom for working for the uplifting of his fellowmen, he works in accordance with Îshvara's will or the law of universal growth.

Q. 9. We hear that Karma is all-powerful. Is it then possible or useful to attempt to regulate one's tendencies and circumstances?

A. 9. Let us first clearly realise the meaning of the question. We do not say that only the Karma that was done up to the end of our last physical life is *all*-power-

ful, but also the Karma that we are doing now and will do in future. Clearly Karma that is not *all* cannot be *all*-powerful; it is only *all*-Karma that can be *all*-powerful. Consequently we can never say that we must not and cannot strive against past evil Karma. That Karma that we are doing now, and can and may do in future, is surely not less strong than what we have done in the past. Remember we do not say *past* Karma only is *all*-powerful, but only that Karma in its *totality* is such. When we say Karma is all powerful, we mean, our actions and thoughts at any point of time are the resultant of the totality of actions and thoughts that have preceded them in this and past lives. Every effort that we make in the present, whether mental or physical, every present thought or act, alters that totality and remoulds our Karma; so does every want of mind-control, every passive yielding to temptation. This general theory of the course of Karma has nothing to do with the individual's duty of constantly trying to resist his evil impulses and cherish and strengthen his nobler ones; anymore than

the universal law of gravitation has anything to do with his getting up a flight of stairs. Mere passivity will be of as little help here as there.

This struggle against the tendencies manifested in the body and the circumstances in which it is placed alone affords the conditions which make possible the action of the Higher Ego on the lower personality. During the struggle, the potential will of the J î v â ṭ m â becomes actual effective will-power, and the man gets into the way of gaining control over his bodies. The bodies must obey the laws of their being; but there is no law compelling the *man* to be the lazy spectator of the operation of natural forces in his bodies. The man's progress on the Path of Liberation is marked by the amount of will he can put into this struggle against the working of the V â s a n â s of his past K a r m a.

This is how chiefly K a r m a acts;—

(i) By encouraging lower desires in the past we have acquired definite tendencies, some very strong and others less so,

and only by bringing these under rigid control and stopping them from deriving fresh strength from our thoughts and deeds, can we ever hope to uproot them and attain the path of liberation. This is what is meant by the building of character, and the attempt to release one's self from the bondage of evil.

(ii) By having neglected the opportunities of doing our duty in the past, we have raised difficulties in the way of realising our nobler desires in the present; and only by struggling to do our duty in the present in spite of the difficulties of circumstances can we be gradually released from the bondage of circumstances caused by our past neglect of duty.

(iii) While cultivating the better tendencies and steadily doing one's duties, we unfortunately often acquire a sense of self-righteousness, of superiority over our struggling brothers. This is the "bondage of good Karma," which is a far worse bondage than the first one, being very insidious it is exceedingly hard even to realise and hence

naturally difficult to overcome. To break down this petrifying attitude of the Jîva—which can scarcely be overcome by its own unaided efforts—it seems almost necessary, though it sounds cruel, to say so, that it should be dragged through the mire.

Q. 10. How should we set about this building of character?

A. 10. By earnest and constant meditation on the virtues that we specially lack, and of the ways in which they may be practiced in ordinary daily life; and by daily reviewing our life to see how far we have succeeded in the practice of the virtues during the thousand and one opportunities that our dealings with others in ordinary life give us.

Q. 11. What are these virtues; please enumerate them?

A. 11. Different classifications may be and have been made of virtues and vices from different points of view. For our purposes it would be convenient to divide them into two classes, namely, (1) regarding self, and (2) regarding others. The first defines the

duties to one's own (*a*) Physical, (*b*) Subtle and (*c*) Causal bodies, while the latter applies them to one's (*a*) Superiors, (*b*) Equals and (*c*) Inferiors.

It is possible to reduce both into one class with the help of necessary explanations, as *e.g.*, that one's virtues and vices in relation to others, help or hinder his own evolution and are therefore also a variety of self-regarding virtues and vices, and on the other hand, that the virtues and vices that are properly self-regarding are only a variety of the others, because the occasion for their exercise by anyone occurs only when he is living in relation with others and would not exist or be practiced otherwise. From yet another standpoint, it may be said, that just as one owns certain duties towards others; so others own corresponding duties to one. In legal phraseology, duties go with rights, and it might be said that to insist upon one's rights of various kinds is a duty to self. This again may be said to be but the general virtue of justice, and so on.

Q. 12. What is the duty to the physical body?

A. 12. We have defined duty to be the proper adjustment of the higher and the lower instincts. The physical body possesses two sets of opposing inclinations:—(1) the instinct to resist all trouble and pain that the body might be put to, and (2) the consciousness of making itself an efficient instrument by training. The proper adjustment of these two instincts in our physical life comprises the duty of the physical body. Physical well-being has always been regarded as an integral part of the ethical scheme, for it is one of the most important means to the proper realisation of the ethical end. To despise the body, to ill-treat it, to torture it with ascetic practices, is as useless as it is wrong—nay criminal. The good old Hindu teaching is शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्म साधनं—which simply means that a man's first duty is to his own body and that it is the foundation on which the superstructure of social and religious life is to be reared. So far as the foundation is shaky it will react inevitably on the house built upon it. Are we not faced everyday with the unhealthy hankering after the uncommon and the un-

canny? Who can deny that most of the pessimistic viraga and bad philosophy, the cheap spiritualism and moony mysticism of the world exists merely because of deranged nerves and disordered stomachs? A deranged liver has to answer for much in this world.

In so far as the 'I' lives, the soul which conceives, and, what is more, is free, is not separated from the body. The body is the outward embodiment of freedom, and in it the 'I' is sensible. It is an irrational and sophistical doctrine, which separates body and soul, calling the soul the thing in itself, and maintaining that it is not touched or hurt when the body is wrongly treated, or when the existence of a person is subject to the power of another. Very little observation of life is necessary to prove how much of most of our everyday failings are due to general impaired vitality or special forms of illnesses, and how much of our relations with our fellow-men would be rendered pleasanter if we ourselves were fairly healthy. Peevishness, anger, envy, instability, would all be replaced by breezy good humor, patience,

perseverence, gentleness, and compassion. A strong, healthy, well-built body has quite as much moral significance as for instance, a fine character, and more than a mere well-trained intellect. It makes the path smoother and diminishes the risks of going wrong. It will thus be seen that adopting practices injurious to physical well-being is cutting at the very root of the moral life. Over and above all this "to be shapely of form is so infinitely beyond, wealth, power, fame, all that ambition can give, that these are dust before it." It will be percieved that it is of incalculable aesthetic significance, to have a fine body, for it satisfies one of the most deepseated desires of humanity. Give me a beautiful form—रूपं देहि—is the daily prayer of millions.

Q. 13. What virtues have to be cultivated for this purpose?

A. 13. (*a*) Cleanliness :—Daily bathing and daily washing of clothes worn next to the skin is a time-honored practice, and must be scrupulously and thoroughly carried out

(*b*). Moderation in food and sleep :—

gluttony and over-sleeping injure the physical —by producing early senility—as also the subtler bodies. Occasional fasts are good, when not overdone, as among the Jains. The food, while varied and nutritive, is not to produce a feeling of heaviness. The use of foods and drinks which are so hot or so cold, that even the thick skin of the hand cannot well bear their temperature, is to court dyspepsia and other ills with open eyes. What should be said to those then who fill themselves with chillies, rape seeds and other such exceedingly irritant substances which produce blisters even on the tough outer skin, what can be the result of such brutal treatment of the delicate mucous membranes except permanent impairment of health and a shortened life? Remember the teaching of the Gîṭâ about Sâṭṭvic food.

(*c*). Exercise:—Gymnastics bring out the capabilities of one's muscles and nerves and are to be studiously practised, especially by the girls; for the wholesome effects of active outdoor life are practically denied to them, while the duties of motherhood make

a serious drain on their vitality. No race can prosper whose mothers are weaklings and old long before they need be.

English games, like football, hockey, cricket, polo, should also be diligently practised, for besides their beneficent physical effects they have the great advantage that they train the growing lads in the vital importance of unity, of subordination, of concerted action. These should be supplemented by a course of Malkhambha, wrestling, boxing, fencing, dagger-play sword-play, to give the necessary poise and grace to the body, while training the eye to accuracy and alertness.

They also teach him the much needed moral lesson how to take a beating with good grace—a lesson which the thin-skined Hindus would do well to learn.

The satisfaction of the aesthetic sense is a most important part of our daily life, and it accrues abundently when physical work is converting a lean hungry-looking body, or still more a huge bloated overfed body, into a thing of symmetry and beauty. The Greek

cult of beauty was developed from their frequenting gymnasiums where they had ample opportunities of training their eyes with the contemplation of perfected male and female bodies not concealed by drapery.

Q. 14. What do you mean by culture?

A. 14. By culture is meant the symmetrical development of the physical, intellectual, volitional, emotional and artistic elements of our complex nature in mutual harmony, tending to the perfection of the complete life. A man of culture is neither vulgar nor pedantic. The mere accumulation of vast stores of learning or great holiness is not culture. One-sided development is not at all a beautiful or desirable thing. It is the fashioning of the *whole* man that is real culture. As a matter of fact the several elements are so inter-related that a true development of one is not possible without a corresponding development of the others. The best form of activity is that which is the outcome of the fittest body, the largest thought, and the deepest sensibility.

It will be seen that culture postulates a

certain amount of leisure. No man who is harassed with an insufficiency of daily bread and all whose time is occupied with the necessity of earning it for himself and family can possess this indispensible element in the acquiring of culture. Wealth therefore is not to be despised in a fit of so-called asceticism. However great the capacities of a Brâhmaṇa or a Kshaṭriya to acquire culture and profit by it, he clearly cannot do so if he is a pauper doing a coolie's work for his daily sustenance. Similarly, however small the capacity of a low caste man may be thought to be, if he is rich and is so inclined he can acquire culture, and profit himself and others by it. To penalise this priceless acquisition as the Hindu Ṛishis have done to all but the highest caste, who generally are not overburdened by the good things of the world is to act as wisely as the British Government has done, in imposing heavy fees for higher education, the result of which is that the poor man with brains is shut out and the inheritor of riches but not brains does not care for it or can much profit by it.

Q. 15. What are the duties for the subtler bodies—the Sûkshma and the Kâraṇa Sharîras?

A. 15. (*a*) The Culture of the Emotions.
(*b*) The Culture of the Intellect.
(*c*) The Culture of the Will.

(*a*) The desires that a man has gratified tend to repeat themselves. Many of the desires we have brought from our past lives are of the lower kind. These have to be displaced by the development of the nobler ones. The daily contemplation of the virtues and of the lives of great men, as described in the Iṭihâsas, Purâṇas, biographies and histories, with the steady wish to act up to what is highest and best in them is a potent means towards this end. But a word of warning is necessary here against a too literal acceptance of the stories from the Purâṇas. These old-world writers often deficient in the sense of humour and the fitness of things so exaggerated things and went into such excesses in their treatment of the subject that it has often become ludicrous when not quite mischievous under their hands. The modern student in his efforts to

rehabilitate these old ideals has to be very alert that he too does not lose his sober common-sense in such company. A still higher means is through the development of our artistic sensibilities. A whole-hearted cultivation of music and song, painting and sculpture, philosophy and poetry is a most efficient means towards this end. It is again to be understood that emotions of beauty are not likely to be developed by the contemplation of the images of Hindu Gods, nor is much genuine poetry to be found in the splendid but artificial versification of the classical Samskṛita writers. Poetry to be real must come straight from the heart, throbbing with emotion, hot and palpitating with life, all aglow from the fiery furnace of the soul. For the former, one must go to the grand models of Greece and of Italy and for the latter, one must look to our own Vernaculars and to the spoken languages of the West.

One of the most potent causes of national degeneration is the cherishing of wrong ideals. Ideals that had their day and are anachronisms, are hindrances and bars at the

present day. For instance some practices that were not only tolerated, but even considered meritorious, in old days, are condemned now by all right thinking men. As examples, the matricide of Parashurâma, the open sexuality of the Veḍic sacrifices, Saṭi, Infanticide etc. Our national degradation--so low as to make us feel degraded in our own eyes—is the direct result of such wrong ideals. If we had steadily kept our eyes even on the teachings and ideals inculcated in the Mahâbhâraṭa, and had realised the lesson that disunion is weakness, that scattering of energy is ineffectiveness, that getting involved in bye issues, losing sight of the goal, being deterred by hindrances in the path, is ruin; that exclusiveness is death—we would not have come to this pass. Alas! what has been our ideal? Not the energetic, alert, wide-awake, determined diplomat, full of resources, never acknowledging himself beaten, ever-striving, ever-successful, Shṛî Kṛiṣhṇa of the Mahâbhâraṭa—but the youthful and sensuous Shṛî Kṛishṇa of the Bhâgavaṭa and the Brahmavai-

varta, the playmate of the gopîs, the flute-player, the stealer of milk and butter, the player of endless pranks. We have become what we have worshipped. From this state we are slowly, too slowly, emerging under the influences of western training. it is these nations of the West that have learnt full well the lesson that we ought to have learnt, but did not. Japan too had to learn it from the West, before she could rise from her sleep of centuries.

(*b*) The only way to cultivate the intellect is to devote some time daily to study of a nature that will exercise thought, and not merely load the brain with isolated, undigested facts, and what is worse, vapid phrases devoid of content.

(*c*). Will is strengthened by the subduing of all those things which limit its freedom. These things are the evil tendencies that have grown with the growth of ahamkâra through ages past. Desires must be weaned from sensuous objects—this is the first step—for things that rouse desire control the Jîva and are not controlled by it. Not till

the senses are under control can the individual gain his freedom and become the master, instead of being the slave that he is. But desires cannot be wholly checked. They can only be guided. Learn to discriminate between the real, the things that matter, and the unreal, the things that do not matter. This will show the way the desires have to be guided. Cultivate calmness, tranquillity, subduedness, as against hurry, agitation, excitement. Practise meditation, concentration, disinterestedness. Keep a constant watch over yourself. Steadily practise the virtues. There is an evil will also and strong in spite of ourselves. Beware of that! Even such a great man as Ḍhṛiṭarâshṭra had to bemoan it: "I know Ḍharma, but my heart goes not out towards it; I know Aḍharma, but my heart shuns it not."

Q. 16. What are the duties to one's self?

A. 16. Truth. This is the first and most important duty from which all others flow. Because one life pervades all living forms—that of Îshvara—and Truth is con-

formity to His life, therefore we are in conformity to His life only in so far as we are truthful in thought and speech and deed. To the extent of our non-truthfulness is the divine nature in us choked. B r a h m a n is called Truth in our scriptures, for Truth covers all the sphere of the world's activities. On the one hand it embraces all the duties which are calculated to secure man's harmonious growth till he reaches the goal of Godhead; and on the other, it reaches down to speaking and acting truthfully in the smaller concerns of our daily life, accuracy in observing things by means of our senses, and in conveying them correctly to our fellowmen. There is no alleviation for human suffering except through perfect veracity of thought and speech and action. Every untruth, great or small, strengthens the wall of ignorance in which we are encased, and makes us stray from the path of knowledge; more, it creates an inner wall of separation between the teller of the untruth aud the hearer, and so prevents the "happiness" described above. Rightly understood all *virtue* consists in the affirmation of truth, and *vice* in the

negation of it. In a general way, this is universally true. For instance, appropriating the property of another is practically to affirm that it belongs to us, when as a matter of fact, it does not belong to us; to attempt the life of another is to affirm that that life is in our possession, as a thing belongs to its master; to betray one's country is to treat one's country as if it were not his own; Ingratitude is the denial of benefit received. Thus, Vice is the negation of truth. This negation, to be culpable, must be conscious; and thus all kinds of vice may be traced back to falsehood. Falsehood is *vice* because it desires the opposite of that which is; and as such it is *absurd* in the logical sense of this word; and virtue being conformity to truth, is simply *reason*.

Truth, *rightly understood*, thus comprehands all classes of duties.

Q. 17. Are the True and the Good then absolutely identical?

A. 17. In a general way, for all practical purposes, the two may be regarded as identical, yet in the precise sense, they

are not so. While it is quite true that moral verities are *truths*, yet it does not follow that the *good* must be the *true*. Truth may be understood in two ways—in an objective and in a subjective sense. *Objectively*, truth is *being* itself; it is the necessary and essential relation of things, which would continue to be what it is, even if there were no persons present to form a thought of it. *Subjectively*, truth is the conformity of the thought to its subject. Like truth, good also may be regarded objectively and subjectively. Objectively, the *good* is the character based upon the essence of things, which imposes an obligatory law upon the moral agent; subjectively, it is the conformity of the will to this obligatory law. Now the objective *good*, or good *in itself*, is not the same as the objective *true*, that is *being* itself; and the subjective *good*, or *moral* good, is not the same as the subjective *true*, or the logically *true*. Then again, there are some truths which, though inevitable in all practical applications, cannot be regarded as *moral truths*—for instance, the Laws of Logic, of Mathematics, and so on. One *can* free himself from

moral laws even when recognised as such, the Laws of Logic he can never throw off. "The essential character of the good as compared with the True, is that it *commands* the will without *constraining* it.

Q. 18. Is 'Truth' absolute or relative?

A. 18 Abstract Truth—the true relation between the universe and the mind of man—may be regarded as *absolute*; but this exists for humanity under purely formal conditions. What concerns us most is concrete Truth—the relation between the universe and the facts of experience and of social life showing the way how best to adapt ourselves to this and to reconcile the seeming difference between the two. This latter may be regarded as *relative.* All practical life pertains to the Individual; and as Individuality implies difference, one and the same ethical demand upon each individual would entail tasks of very varying degrees of difficulty; hence the necessity of laying stress upon one virtue for one and another for another; for no two persons is the way absolutely the

same, though for each individual only one decision is the really true one. If the demand for exertion is to be of the same strength, its character must vary according to the idiosyncracy of the person called upon to exert himself. Hence the relativity of ethical doctrines, and our whole-hearted belief in the changeability of their values according to times and circumstances; with us they are never an end in themselves, but only a means to the attainment of M u k ṭ i, through the fulfilment of *all* our duties. If everyone of us tried always to do his best—and if no more than this were ever expected of any one—how much bitter social persecution and religious tyranny would every one be saved? There will be no possibility left for idle gossip and criminal slander, when once we have learnt to refuse to take things on trust, and to insist on investigation and evidence. Life would become a veritable heaven instead of the hell that it often is under modern conditions. It was a perception of this fact; that errors in observation are impossible to avoid even in matters purely scientific, and allowance

has to be made for what is known among observers of nature, as 'personal equation'; that made the rule of Manu necessary, namely, deliberate lies are not to be told, and only what is true is to be told, *unless it is unpleasant*, in which latter case it is not to be flung about carelessly and recklessly. Unpleasant truths are only to be spoken when it becomes one's duty to speak, and not otherwise. If one happens to be a public official, then he must speak out straight and true even at the risk of giving offence; as otherwise for this very want of correct information, things may go wrong, culminating in injustice to individuals and even disaster to the nation. Much more than a mere guard over the tongue becomes necessary in matters of every day concern. Here each one of us is steeped up to his lips in 'biases' of every kind giving him a tremendous emotional twist and rendering correct judgment all but impossible. It is only by long and arduous training that we can hope to learn to observe facts even approximately in their true perspective and thence to make unbiassed deductions and

convey them in clear unmistakeable language. Only one who has learnt to scrutinise all round him searchingly and is always on the alert, can be said to be on the road to truth. Because this faculty of weighing evidence accurately, and being on guard constantly against subtle and numerous aberrations is so rare, has it been necessary to dwell at some length on this virtue which indeed, when fully and rightly comprehended, will be seen to be the root whence all other virtues come into being.

The various forms which Truth to one's self takes in every day life are:—

(1) Tolerance. This virtue is possible only to that person who has learnt to recognise that not only *others* are fallible, but that he himself is so also; and that it is as possible for his own opinions and beliefs to be open to doubt as those of others. Unless he has learnt to doubt he cannot be tolerant; where faith is dogmatic, real tolerance is impossible; only he who has actively felt the uncertainty and difficulty of reaching correct conclusions can realise the absolute

validity and reasonableness of differences of opinion. When called upon to judge another by the same standard that one applies to himself, he ought to be able to say that he has actually felt the same temptations and the same passions and that he has succeeded in conquering them by his free will; if the temptations to which the other man has succumbed are unknown to us, we cannot judge how difficult it was for the man to battle against them. Morality which is censorious, which is made up of antipathies, and has no sympathy with human nature in all its shapes, degrees, depressions and elevations is not the very highest or truest morality. The work of life in all those persons who are capable of profiting by experience is to undermine this too pedantic and narrow a view of morals which is possible only among youths and doctrinaires. The mellowness of experience to which the realities of life are living forces brings tolerance to bear on every portion of their conduct. It will be only through the widespread practice of tolerance that the rights of the citizen

within the State can be fully respected. For instance, the theological and the military spirit have always worked in union; and unless genuine tolerance is fostered and strengthened, theological tyranny will never be curbed; and as long as this exists it is not possible for it to allow the decay of the military spirit—not indeed of the truly rationalised and patriotic kind, but of the dominating brutal kind. And as long as this continues, the liberty of the people will continue to be in jeopardy.

(2) Justice. It is the inward harmonious relation between egotism and altruism. These two—self-assertion and self-abnegation—are the feet which carry the soul to M u k ṭ i. It is their mutual blending and 'give and take' which make social existence possible and prevents such suicidal aberrations as those of S h i b î and K a r ṇ a and H a r i s h c h a n ḍ r a (altruistic) and of P a r a s h u r â m a and R â-v a ṇ a (egoistic). Neither of the two is desirable alone by itself. If all the world becomes supremely egoistic, there will be general destruction; and if all were to become supremely altruistic, each person would at every mo-

ment be interfering with another; and the the result of this also would equally be destruction. The pendulum must swing from side to side if the clock of creation is to point out correct time; each oscillation has its separate function to perform; and it is only by this rythmic swing that every personality can develop unhampered in its characterstic fashion, and thus rendering aid to itself, render it for the similar evolution of others.

(3) Discretion. The fanatical religious or moral preacher always shouts for "truth at any price." He is a professional and therefore discourses cheap morality in season and out of season. A good deal of nonsense about the subject is being constantly thrust by him upon an unheeding world. The man of science as well as the man of affairs knows that self-preservation is one of the primordial instincts of all living things, no less of man. No one can speak "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but truth" in society without being hounded out of it—be the society primitive or modern. Each one is found by immutable nature to adapt

himself to his surroundings, if he must live. It is this adaptability that is known as tact. The man who will identify truthfulness with rudeness is seldom the man to emerge succesful as "the fittest" from the fierce ordeal of the "struggle for existence." Not only convention, not only prudence, but even philanthropy requires that a veil should be thrown over many things in actual life. Many occasions may suggest themselves when the "whole truth" may be sinful, nay even criminal. We must not also forget that it is but seldom possible to find out *exactly* and *fully* what is the truth. It was no jest which made Pilate ask "What is Truth.?" Everyone whose duty has at all been to investigate truth, whether as a lawyer, as a scientific man, or even as a business man, must know that even with the very best of motives, it is but given to a very few—if to any—to observe accurately and report correctly. To the average humanity in its social life it is therefore absolutely necessary to temper truth with wisdom. There are many varieties and grades of truth, each applicable to a different set of objects and

circumstances and there is no such thing as a sharp opposition between truth and error with no intervening stages between. The object of speech is to help others as much as possible and this is only possible by adapting ones' speech to their idiosyncracies. This was a fact thoroughly well understood by Manu when he laid down the law—सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम. Not that he encouraged lying, but only taught prudence, moderation, tact, discretion. He definitely says—प्रियं च नानृतंब्रूयात् एषधर्मः सनातनः —however pleasant the lie it must not be uttered; this is the old Dharma. It was an accurate diagnosis of the case which makes him give the sound advice—नापृष्टः कस्य चिद्ब्रूयात्—for he who talks much must talk loosely and at random; the tongue was to be controlled, otherwise it would be giving needless offence every moment; one was not bound to reply to every stray questioner, but only to him who had a *right* to an answer and then only was the answer to be "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." The fear of giving pain gave place to the higher duty of grave counsel. In the social

life of man "truth" has to be tempered by sympathy and tact, not so in his life as a scientific, religious or philosophic investigator or in judicial investigtions. The whole question is dealt with in his peculiarly illuminating way by Mr. John (now Viscount) Morley in his essay "On Compromise" to which the student is referred for further light.

(4) Temperance or Self-discipline. This is the first necessity of the moral life; it is the very essence of virtue. It is the subordination of the lower impulses of life to the higher. Its opposite, intemperance, is not only the giving way to these lower impulses but worse still—the subordination and utilisation of the higher, to forward the ends of the lower. Morality is the establishment of the reign of the rational will in the chaos of natural but blind impulses. This does not mean that they are *im*-moral and must be killed out. It only means that they are *un*-moral and have to be regulated, to be disciplined, to be brought under control. The man who is ever modest but always self-possessed, whose wits never desert him in

the most trying circumstances, whose nature in well controlled, is the man of character. His life is consistent and harmonious, and calmly but steadily pursues its even purpose. The intemperate life is wanting in modesty, in unity, is painfully self-contradictory. It is like that of a dog racing round a moor, aimless and unprogressing. The mastery of the original irrational energy, and the conversion of it into an energy of reason itself, is the essential business of the moral life from first to last. The best way of doing this is by a sound education and good home surroundings where the natural needs are satisfied in an orderly manner and thus prevented from dangerous outbreaks.

(5) Self-respect. We must have constantly expanding ideals of our own function and duties in the world, and act so that these ideals are illutrated in our life. This ideal of a strenuous spirit has been beautifully expressed by Wordsworth in his "Happy warrior":—

"Who not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, perservering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast."

Every mean thought, desire or deed, by debasing us in our estimation, tends to pull down our ideals and causes us to degnerate. Self-respect is incompatible with false humility, with the effacement of one's common sense, and of one's intellect, which too often pass for devotion and are held to be so necessary for salvation in so many of the latter-day sects. Self-respect requires each one to stick to his just rights of all kinds, including his right of independent judgment. The surrendering of one's rights is opposed to self-respect, and to a proper performance of one's duties. For whenever a right is surrendered it is not always done for the advancement of the world, but because rights are associated with duties, and when these get irksome, people surren der the rights to escape from the duties, and at the same time attribute to themselves great credit and righteousness for the giving up of the rights! Often they are surrendered out of sheer cowardliness; we are afraid to face the odium and the risk to our ease which a defiance of well-established customs and authority—though convinced firmly that it is evil would bring on us. A self-respecting

man cannot be frightened out of his course by unpopularity or even contempt. It is not meant that we should have an over-weening opinion of ourselves, and show ourselves as what we are not in fact. This would be acting a lie. What is meant is that we should always act up to our best ideals, which we must uphold before all, without fear.

(6) Determination or Resoluteness. When we embark on any undertaking after mature deliberation, we must not let any difficulties deter us, for as already pointed out, the struggle against difficulties brings out the energies of the Self; and if we are to be truthful to the Self, we must not give up our work in life for fear of the immediate difficulties that threaten us.

(7) Courage. This too is only truth in another form. We all know that the world is governed by the law of Karma, and we can never suffer from undeserved physical or mental trouble. Cowardice is based on the false notion that it is possible to escape pain by speaking or acting untruthfully. A perfect reliance on Truth,

on God that is Love and Law, and the contemplation of the great truth of the life of the world, which cannot be increased or decreased by anything that man can do, is the best means for curing one of cowardly instincts.

(8) Tranquillity or Self-possession. A dignified tone of calm contentment throughout one's life will let the bodily and mental activities go on unimpeded. The mighty B h î ṣ h m a is the ideal of this virtue. It has to be cultivated sedulously. Constant worry and excitement, especially over trifles, disturb the even flow of natural forces in one's body and mind, lower their vitality and impede their action. Constant calm cannot be immediately attained. Some time must be set apart daily in which the mind and body can be maintained conciously calm. Gambling in every shape is one of the greatest bars to tranquillity, being but a means to secure intense mental excitement. It is very immoral also, because it fosters strongly the unrighteous spirit of gaining at the expense of another, without rendering him any service whatsoever in return. Hence this has to be totally avoided, not only on ordi-

nary days, but also on occasions of pseudo-religious festivals, with which it is unfortunately associated in several parts of India. It paves the way to the shirking of one's duties to one's family and friends and leads the gambler inevitably into crime. N a l a and Y u ḍ h i s h ṭ h i r a are frightful examples from old India of the irresistible and maddening fascination of this vice. Cheating is an invariable handmaid of this "game." No *habitue* of Monte Carlo could have better depicted the gamesters terrible frenzy and its bitter consequences than does a hymn of the Ṛ i g v e ḍ a. The old lawgivers erred sadly when instead of penalising this curse of sober civic and family life put it on a footing with the European duel, a challenge to which no gentleman *i. e.*, K s h a-ṭ r i y a, could refuse with honor.

(9) Intellectual honesty. This is a form of truthfulness to one's Self that is greatly neglected. If we are not loyal to our own beliefs in our daily lives, if we are afraid to expose our weaknesses to our own gaze or to that of others, if we persuade ourselves or others that we know more than

we really know, or are better than we really are, we forge for ourselves tremendous obstacles to our own future intellectual growth and to the acquiring of wisdom.

(10) Love of knowledge. The energy which that love engenders, and which ought to be ceaselessly spent in the cause of the investigation and dissemination of truth of all kinds, is another of the duties to Self. Blind acceptance of teachings from books, or from persons whom we may believe to be our betters, cannot be a helpful practice, even if the teacher be believed to be superhuman. Really great persons never *force* their views on any man, even though he stand in the relation of a pupil to them; they do not expect him to cancel his intellect, or be untruthful to his own nature, by a false self-depreciation. Healthy scepticism, in the sense of suspended judgment, and intense curiosity in the acquisition of knowledge, are the only roads to the discovery of truth.

Our crude metaphysical cast of mind, leading but to dreary dialectics, is a good deal responsible for our present-day degeneration. We have despised God's work—

refused to study it, be enlightened by it, and the result is patent to all who care to notice it. The sun of progress is almost reaching its noonday glory in other lands, but ours still sleeps in the cold darkness. Science, art, commerce, even humanism, we have despised and neglected. We have chilled our emotions, we have withered our power of initiative. We have systematically misinterpreted the Upanishaṭ logion, एकेन विज्ञातेन सर्वं विज्ञातं भवति, and firmly believed that the 'Many' could be safely despised and put aside in our effort to grasp the 'One.' Bitter humiliation has resulted from this attitude. Not till the 'Many' is grasped and conquered may we hope to realise the One, the Supreme. The goal is not to be attained at a single bound. The path has to be trodden steadily and pain and tribulation to be cheerfully borne. What the logion means is simply that the out-look is incomplete, is distorted, till the top is reached.

And all this for what? For the emptiness and unreality of an unsatisfying and ill-understood philosophy. It is not by a scorning of God's gifts, but by loving them in-

tensely and showing that love in the vigorous and persistent efforts to understand them —undeterred by the harassing details and minute exactness which are inevitable in any serious investigation—that we can hope to understand our real relation to the world around us and beyond us. In so far as our view of the world is defective, to that extent will our notions of Deity be also defective.

It may as well be pointed out here that when differences of opinion, especially with regard to religion, have become acute and *fixed*, they have ceased to be healthy and stimulating. But these cannot be got rid of by any amount of intellectual jugglery, or a cold balancing of pros and cons. The emotions of the persons wished to be influenced have to be roused in the right direction, and then, by raising these persons to a higher point of view and thus producing a wider outlook, can their intellectual assent be secured. This warning is necessary, for every day we see acrimonious discussions carried on, rousing intense hatred and hostility, ending in persecutions and

murders even. This never was, nor is, the method of great teachers.

(11) Work. Never to be idle. We should set apart a certain amount of time every day for regular and continued work. Absolute idleness, Indolence, always are to be avoided; a lazy man is like one who keeps his door ever open for thieves. The best preventive against idleness lies in the firm conviction that our life in the world is not for the purpose of being trifled with; every moment of it is to be utilised in ways likely to be most beneficial to the world. It may be pointed out that manual labor is not to be treated with contumely. All labour is honorable—irrespective of its being manual or professional. We do not sufficiently recognise the dignity of labor, as is proved by our treatment of the laboring classes.

Q 19. What are the duties to ones' superiors?

A. 19. (1) Reverence. This has to be distinguished from false humility, or self-effacement, which can do no good to them or to us. While offering reverence we have

to remember that it is very different from mere cringing and that we are not to abase ourselves or fail to be dignified. Real respect to superiors in wisdom, in saintliness, in age, in short for a worth demonstrated by conduct and achievement, and the courtesy and obedience that reverence begets, is an old Hindu virtue which a false appreciation of modern European civilisation should not lead us to forget and to despise.

Here it may be pointed out that while accepting this reverence the superior is not to forget himself and begin to imagine himself as something very high and mighty, and treat the inferior with harshness and contumely. It was to discourage the growth of this extremely undesirable but common trend of the human mind that Manu wrote :—

सम्मानाद् ब्राह्मणो नित्यमुद्विजेत विषादिव,
अपमानस्य चाकांक्षेदमृतस्येव सर्वदा ॥

and Browning sang:—

"Then welcome each rebuff,
"That turns Earth's smoothness rough,
"Each sting that bids nor sit, nor stand, but go!

"Be our joys three parts pain!
"Strive to hold cheap the strain;
"Learn, nor account the pang:
'Dare, never grudge the throe."

(Rabbi Ben Ezra.)

(2) Patriotism. Love of one's country. This must be cultivated by honestly trying to make our country the better for our being in it, more capable of rendering help to the world at large; not as making it an end in itself, but rather a stepping stone to the service of humanity at large, which alone should be our ideal goal. We must realise the immense power of concerted action and practise it. A solitary person, however great, can accomplish nothing; but he who knows how to combine with others at the right moment can do anything.

"Look at life in England, how highly it is organised. Look at the army of clergymen, teachers, lawyers, and doctors it employs to look after its body, mind, and soul. Then every parish has its vestry, every county and town its council; every trade its union; every constituency its two or more political parties, each with a meeting place, office-bearers, and often a newspaper of its own. There is a Club, or Society to forward every view, to carry out every

benevolent or political purpose, to conduct all sports and games, to keep up the discipline of every profession; and companies are formed for trade or manufacture. What more shall we say? From the crown to the begger in the street, the people is organised. It is an organic being, jointed and strung together, living as one, with a mind to think, a heart to feel, and hands to do. It needs no control from without, for it is a law unto itself. It makes, respects, obeys, and enforces its own laws, and in this work all have to aid, since the law is the best guarantee for the freedom of each. Its institutions are innumerable. It is made up of institutions which cross one another and are interwoven in every direction—the signs, not the causes of its life. The body is knit together with a close network of communications, roads, railways, canals, rivers, and harbours enabling people and goods to be moved about freely. The people have a common language, race, manners, customs, and history." (Carstairs "British work in India").

What a picture this to contrast with the lethargy one meets at every turn in India. Not till we can produce similar conditions—the whole country throbbing and pulsating with life and energy—— can we feel that we have at all done our duty by motherland.

We must learn to conserve the best of

what we have got. This is being true to the past. At the same time we must beware of bolstering up decaying or atrophied institutions. These have done their work of evolution and we shall be wisely co-operating with nature if we gently help these institutions, which have become a hindrance, to disappear, and give up the energies which are locked up in them to new and healthy institutions, which we must help to form, and not wait for outside influences to force them on us. This is being true to the future.

It is a false view of this virtue which would blind us to our serious defects. In the past, and even in the present, our understanding of this great virtue has been a very narrow one. It has never been even territorial. Always and absolutely it has centred round the Veḍas and their ceremonialism; outside these we only saw Shûḍras, and Mlechchhas, and Râkṣhasas and Monkeys; outside the Veḍas there was nothing that was good, but everything that was bad, which was to be feared, despised, resisted. Even within the pale, we lam-

entably failed to realise the goodness, the beauty, the strength, that lay in union, in federation. Each leader and chief, whether political or religious, was the rival and foe of every other. The result was inevitable. We never built up a large, strong, homogeneous nation, powerful to withstand aggression. What semblance of a Nationality we had was for ever shattered at the first touch of the Musalman conquest, resulting in the wholesale conversion of Afghanistan, Turkistan, Kashmir, and large tracts of India itself to Islâm. *The future nation has to be now built upon different and less exclusive lines.*

It would do us good to read what was written nearly 75 years ago by a thoughtful English official of rare insight, sympathy and honesty of purpose—The Honorable Frederic John Shore, son of Lord Teignmouth, Governor-General of India, in his "Notes on Indian Affairs", on this virtue as understood and practiced in India of his day. Things are scarcely better now after three quarters of a Century, and all our boasted western education and training. He says :—

"Patriotism in its proper sense, *i. e.* a love of ones' country, is a sentiment unknown to any native of India; he has a strong attachment to his own home and village, but so far from extending it beyond that immediate sphere, he probably may be at feud with half the neighbouring hamlets; and so far is this indifference carried towards anything but what is immediately connected with himself, that if it were the purpose of Government to ravage, with fire and sword, any particular District, it might be done just as efficiently with soldiers raised in that Province, as with regiments composed of foreigners" (p. 417 vol II.)

Alas! that such a deplorable state of affairs should be self-imposed and that we should be so blind as to hug the chains that bind us as something to be proud of and the men attempting to knock them off our limbs to be reviled and persecuted, nay even murdered. Were it not for the system that set apart a special class of men as fighters who rapidly and quite naturally degenerated into swashbucklers ready to sell their services to the highest bidder and whose sole occupation was killing and being killed, when not lusting after their neighbour's wife, the state of affairs in the country would not have been so deplorable, as it has been for a long time past.

It will be understood then how this fostering of a spirit of exclusiveness raised up class barriers and brought selfishness in its train making it impossible to build up a civilised, compact, homogeneous Nation. It is only through the willingness and ability of men to co-operate and sink their differences in a spirit of enthusiasm that this becomes possible. No Nation that wants to grow, can afford, for mere "selfishness" if not for real justice, to despise and illtreat its bread-winners. Here in India we have done it all too successfully for over 90 p. c. of the population and are to-day paying the inevitable penalty. Every man, and especially the high caste man, has to understand and to realise in actual daily life that "*all are needed by each one.*" Such co-operation requires sustained and far-reaching organisation and these demand great moral qualities which we cannot begin too soon to cultivate.

(3) Obedience. We must discipline ourselves to yield fully and immediately to rightly constituted authority, even where it goes against our personal inclinations. The reasons

for disobedience must be very grave indeed before any one is justified in taking such a serious bad step.

(4) Gratitude. There is no sin which is regarded as greater than that of ingratitude, while no praises are too high for those who practise the virtue of being grateful. Gratitude is not fawning in expectation of favors to come. It is a manly expression of obligation for help received.

Q. 20. What are our duties to our equals?

A. 20. Brotherly, love and unfailing courtesy are the basis of all one's dealings with equals. The same divine life beats in the hearts of every one of us; and if we are to be true to the divinity in our nature, all our thoughts and acts should be guided by Love. Fear and hatred and discourtesy are violations of our real nature. Some of the minor forms which love takes, especially in our complex modern life are :—

(*a*) Sympathy. We must learn to interest ourselves in ideals different from our own, and in points of view opposed to ours, and not

restrict our sympathy to our own sex, or caste, or sect, or district, and so on. The means of widening one's sympathy is the proper and strenuous cultivation of the imagination. It is because we cannot imagine sufficiently strongly ideals of religion or conduct different from ours that we are intolerant; and it is because we have not learnt to imagine national life in all its complex bearings, that we cannot rise above provincial, racial, sectarian, linguistic, caste and color jealousies.

(*b*) Forgiveness. We must be ready to forgive those that injure us; for in all such cases, if we really use our imagination, and try to realise the motives and aspirations that led them to cause us the injury, by placing ourselves exactly in their position, most injuries will lose their sting.

(*c*) Unswerving loyalty to friends is another Hindu virtue, constantly illustrated by the ancient life outlined in the P u r â ṇ a s. Loyalty to the social organism to which one belongs, and chastity and continence are modifications of this virtue. But only that is true loyalty which honors that which is

intrinsically honorable, and not that which has secured a merely factitous honor in the world by money, rank, or title.

(*d*) Courtesy, hospitality. The genuine Hiṇḍu flavor which these virtues possess, as practised in India, must be by no means allowed to decay. The daily formula after the tarpaṇa is: "may I entertain guests."

Q. 21. What are our duties to our inferiors?

A. 21. The virtues described in the previous answer, but slightly modified, have to be exercised towards the ignorant, the poor and the wretched. These require a much fuller measure of our help than those who are our equals. Hence, love here takes the form of patience, of gentleness, of justice, of charity, of benevolence. The inferior is not to be treated with harshness and contempt. Because one happens to be inferior to you—that is, to have failed in the world in more ways than yourself—that is no reason why he should be trampled under foot; the bruised reed is not to be further broken and

crushed in the mire. It is a terrible responsibility to turn a human soul out of terrestrial life worse than when it entered that phase of existence. It must be borne in mind that most human failures—upon which the inferiority is based—are the result, not of anything inherent in the nature of the man, but of defective social arrangement. The impassioned language that Shakespear puts into Shylock's mouth, about the injustice, the heartlessness, the cruelty with which the Jews were treated by Christians might well be put into the mouth of a Shûḍra addressing a Brâhmaṇa. Do you not despise us, do you not disgrace us, do you not scorn our birth and trample upon us, do you not loathe our touch, nay our very shadow; and what is the reason? I am a lowborn Shûḍra. Has not a Shûḍra eyes? Has not a Shûḍra hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Brâhmaṇa is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If

you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we do not die? If a Shûḍra wrong a Brâhmaṇa what is his forgiveness and humility? Revenge, swift and terrible. What right has a high casteman then to complain of the treatment meted out to him by the English rulers in the country. It is just Nemesis. As we have treated the 'low' caste man so are we being paid back in our own coin. Be it said to the credit of the Englishman's humanity that his treatment of the Indian is not a tenth as bad as that of the Indian to the Indian these thousands of years, even up to to-day. Which caste-Hindu would allow a Pariah to walk into his house or dream even of shaking hands with him. His shadow even must not fall on the road that the high caste man is treading. Up till quite recently in Feudatory Malabar, a Nair who is regarded as a Shûḍra would cut down the still lower Shûḍra if he dared to allow his shadow to fall across his path. Then again the Shûḍra—the Kayastha of Bengal—the Mudaliar of Madras, the Nair of the West Coast—has still less right to complain of

his English masters; seeing that he has not succeeded in emancipating himself from the all too heavy yoke of his B r â h m a ṇ a masters since these thousands of years. He gets a hundred-fold better treatment from his English masters. It is not enough that we are not overbearing, or do not perpetrate injustice; we must be active, we must prevent rudeness and injustice from others. The help that charity prompts us to give to the physical bodies of our fellowmen consists of the giving of food and clothing to the starving and the naked. Unfortunately the vast majority of us have for ages misunderstood totally the real import of the word Ḍ â n a—charity. Our understanding of it has been very narrow, and we have systematically been encouraged in this by the classes that have benefitted by it. Most commonly it makes the B r â h m a ṇ a and the S â ḍ h u the only recipients of charity, wholly irrespective of their fitness for receiving it. The result has been disastrous, not only to the donors, but still more to the recipients. The latter have been pauperised, have lost all sense of true dignity, becoming the pliant

tools of those whom they ought to have guided. Like the pampered Roman mob of a later day, they are always clamoring for it as their due and getting wroth when denied, hurling impotent curses on persons so refusing. This "giving of alms" has co-existed with us for thousands of years with the most frightful social injustices, lapping us in the luxurious arms of self-righteousness—for what remains to be done after having well paid a Brâhmaṇa and getting absolution? No conscience can prick after the application of such an easily got salve!

A truer form of charity is the working for the amelioration of the condition of the wretched and the degraded, the widow, the orphan and the outcaste, the cultivation of their emotions and their minds. We must teach and guide them to substitute nobler desires for the lower and degrading ones. We must help them to better their social and physical conditions. It is only in so far as the people around us rise in self-control and knowledge that we can also hope to rise. The idea that we can raise ourselves to the heights of purity and wisdom and bliss, while

our brethren are sunk in shame and sin is false and pernicious.

Something more than this is expected from those "Superiors" who are actively engaged in the governing of large masses of human beings, like our Indian Ruling Chiefs; as also from those religious leaders who are known as Âchâryas and Mahanṭs, who control the daily life of enormous numbers of followers. The day has completely gone by when our Princes could profitably organise their States mainly with a view to war. Now it behoves them to disband their useless armies. The wars of the future will be decided not so much by armed soldiers as by passive resistance—boycotts and strikes, industrial and economic methods. The time-honored Indian method of protest by *harṭâl* is being learnt by Europe with deadly effect. The money thus saved will be used for the industrial and commercial bettering of their subjects. This will react on the policy of the British Indian Government also, and will help them to reduce their army bill; for the present huge army is not only for

the ostensible reason of guarding the frontier but also for the scarcely veiled reason of guarding against an outbreak amongst the Feudatories; it will also induce them ultimately to abolish the humiliating dictatorship of irresponsible British Residents at Indian Courts, making them ambassadors instead of dictators.

The duty of Princes is not to cherish idle dreams of vainglorious pomp and pride of the feudal days, but to throw themselves heart and soul into the modern conditions of life, to become leaders in social and religious reforms, to provide full facilities for a thorough and free education to all their subjects—even the very lowest; to train themselves, their successors and helpers, in all the financial and political wisdom of the age by travelling and studying in all parts of the world; to enact wise progressive laws, and establish representative institutions. The leading Chiefs might well start an assembly, where they could all meet for a few weeks every year, and bring their principal ministers to help in the discussion of the various policies and experiments carri-

ed on in each State. The test and reward of each noble Ruler would be in the quicker progress of his subjects and their deeply rooted gratitude to him. Our Chiefs should learn to regard themselves as public functionaries, and not as autocratic owners of the States they rule. It is their Ḍharma now to become leaders in Civic virtues, as once it was theirs to be leaders in war.

Let our Ruling Chiefs then set about to organise *industrial* armies with the same minute attention to details and the same loving care and forethought and lavish expenditure which they have so long and to so little purpose spent over their fighting armies. Let them train themselves and their people to look on Civic virtues as something far greater and far more desirable than the savage military 'virtue.' It is a subtle but often repeated fallacy that some of the finest traits of human nature are brought out by war and war alone, and hence they are not to be contemned! It is painful to see otherwise humane and thoughtful people voicing this blasphemy; calling wholesale plunder and organised murder and rape a beneficial

saintly process. No one calls cancer, and leprosy and plague by such sweet and tender and holy names. No, war is war, a savage unholy process which the present character of humanity makes it unfortunately impossible to avoid. It is on no account to be indulged in except under the grim stress of self-defence alone. And for this purpose it is absolutely necessary that the *whole* of the Nation should be trained to the use of arms, and not keep up a mercenary standing army. Under the present political condition of India no native chief requires a single soldier. Why then waste men and money in such profitless shows? The path to glory is not through blood-sodden fields and the anguish of defeated enemies, but through the greatness of the people whom they govern. Their interests should be his interest, their happiness his happiness. So only will they justify their existence in the eyes of the world, which is beginning to regard them as an intolerably expensive and mischievous encumbrance, to be shaken off as quickly as possible. Some of the ways in which their energies might be usefully spent may be

indicated here: roads, bridges, railways should be freely constructed, marshes drained, deserts reclaimed, irrigation pushed on; uniform standards of weights and measures and of coins to be established; full postal and telegraphic facilities provided; separate and independent organs for the legislative, executive and judicial functions created. The fixed land revenue might be converted into a sliding agricultural tax on the lines of the income tax, and so on.

Similarly the great religious heads must improve themselves, otherwise the time is fast coming when they will learn that the nation has lost its faith in the custodians of its religion, and will turn and demand an account of their stewardship. Then woe betide those who cannot render a true account.

Q. 22. What are our duties to animals?

A. 22. Tenderness. Cruelty to dumb animals will inevitably tend to blunt our finer feelings and degrade us. And this is mostly due again to a poverty of imagination, that

prevents our realising the sufferings we inflict on them, and our failure to give to them the necessary protection and sympathy. Our conduct towards them would be very different if we had always in mind the fact that they also have pulsating in them the same great life that ensouls us, unfolded up to the point of keen sentiency. No flesh-eating would be possible after such a realisation. It would savour too much of cannibalism.

Q. 23. What is the difference between Sin, Vice and Crime?

A. 23. The idea underlying the ordinary use of these words is that of the predominance of passion over reason and over the idea of good and duty. Rightly speaking however, the term 'Vice' is alone applicable to the habitual predominance of passion over reason, the odious element in which, is essentially subjective and moral, and which primarily hurts the man himself; and this should not be confounded with 'Crime,' in which the odious element is objective and material, and which, being the outward

manifestation in action of the aforesaid 'pre-dominance,' hurts others, and is punishable under the law of every civilised country. In 'Sin' on the other hand, the odious element is chiefly theological ; it is the infringment not so much of *moral*, as of ecclesiastical law. For instance, the dining of a high caste Hindu with a lowcaste one, or with a European would be a 'Sin'; though neither a 'Vice' nor a 'Crime'; while the habitual indulgence in angry feelings, or gluttony, or over-stimulation of the sex-passion, would be a 'Vice,' but neither a 'Sin' nor a 'Crime.' When King Shibi gave up his body for the sake of the pigeon, he saved himself from the sin of not protecting a refugee, but committed a serious crime against his country and people. Arjuna in refusing to live with Urvashî saved himself from a sin, but if he had lived with her, he would not have committed a 'crime,' as his action would have been quite in keeping with the practice of the times. Parashurâma killing his mother under his father's orders incurred no 'sin,' but committed a heinous 'crime.' The telling of a deliberate lie to

save the life of a Brâhmaṇa, though immoral, will not be 'sinful.' According to Manu it will not be 'sinful' to pour melted lead into the ears of the Shûḍra who happens to hear Veḍic Manṭras; but all the same it would be a brutal 'crime'. The ceremony of 'garbhâḍhâna,' if not performed, would be a 'sin,' but if performed, when the wife is below 12, would be a brutal 'crime' punishable under the Penal Code. The rite of 'Saṭi'—not only *not* 'sinful,' but even 'highly meritorious' on ecclesiastical grounds, would be a 'crime.' Among these three, the idea of what constitutes 'sin' is the most variable, for the simple reason that it has no basis in nature, but is dependent upon the vagaries of an interested priesthood. The idea of what constitutes 'crime' comes next; it is variable within narrower limits; as the notion of 'criminality' to a certain extent, is common all over the world; for instance, the Decalogue is almost universal. The least variable of all is the notion of 'vice'; it has its basis in human nature itself, and as such is variable within very narrow limits.

Q. 24. What is the difference between

law-enforced morals and moral laws, and between these and natural laws?

A 24. The moral laws of every community represent the high-water-mark of the highest ethical conscience, reached by the wisest and the best of that community at that particular time; but not so the legal and social codes. These latter are always much lower than the former, except when they have been imposed from the outside by an advanced race ruling a lower one. These indicate the lowest limit of morality that the community is prepared to tolerate from its members; sinking below that level is denounced as criminal, and is met by punishment, legal or social. The moral law places an ideal of duty before everyone, but no one is compelled to follow it, except in so far as the compulsion is from within, though failure to act up to it will bring down the disapproval of all good and right-thinking people. The steady raising of the level of the criminal and social laws ought to be the aim of all teachers and philanthropists. For as their level rises steadily, so will rise the level of the moral law—the cons-

cience of the community. The reverse also holds true—the higher the conscience of a community the higher their laws. Sometimes, however, owing to causes which are rather obscure, a curious and heart-breaking regression is noticed. To take only two examples—gambling and sex-purity. Now gambling is not only denounced by moral laws, it is a criminal offence according to ordinary laws, but the payment to the winner is regarded as a "debt of honor"—not so the debt contracted for the eminently moral purposes of the support of one's family or the extension of trade. The double standard of sex-purity set up—very stringent where woman is concerned and very lax if the sinner be a man, due to the savage feeling of proprietorship in a woman's body, must be levelled up, the sooner the better for the race.

The distinction between the laws defined above and the laws of nature is that this last term applies to all normal human beings at all times, and not merely to individuals or individual communities like the former. Neither are these, like the former laws, capable of modification or repeal. It is only a brief way

of expressing—a résumé, a formula of—the relationships and their results between groups of facts as perceived by man in Nature. Much trouble and pain in practical life are caused by the mixing up of the natural laws with moral and social conventions called laws. They should be carefully discriminated; though both are the product of human intelligence, they are not identical. Sometimes we imagine that a natural law has also changed. It is not so. Owing to an increase of our perceptive and reflective faculties, we find that we had misread the law, and the attempt to give it a better "expression" is misunderstood as a *change* in the law. This probably applies to the other laws also.

It will be noticed that in the scheme of morality outlined here, there is no room for the merely ascetic or monastic spirit, or for belief in merit gained by suffering and privation as such. The aim is the attainment of the highest possible efficiency—physical, moral, emotional, intellectual, artistic, and spiritual—for the nation as a whole.

Amongst a nation made up of citizens of such solid worth there could be no room for

debauchery, for drunkenness, for class-antagonisms, dividing man from man—the canker at the root drying up the fair tree of nationality. The race must progress and not merely the individual; and he only has progressed truly who, freeing himself from special schemes of theology, has realised this in all its depth and width. Never again may the beauty and truth of things long gone be realised. The past is past. The life giving waters of the mighty Gangâ flow not back to Hardwâr after they have united with the vast ocean. Only by rising into the clouds can they return, newly incarnated as rain. Those, only, survive in this deadly struggle who, owing to self-control and self-knowledge, have become ethically "the fittest," whose watchword is help, co-operation, altruism; and not those who lust merely for power, for individual exaltation, for escape for themselves only from the bondage of Mâyâ and of pain, unsympathetic, and heedless of the needs of humanity. The Jîva that hopes that it can grasp "the life eternal" for its own exclusive, separate and individual comfort,

while others may continue to suffer, never succeeds, for it has failed entirely to understand even the very first elements of that life, which is none-separateness. Such a Jîva is sure to be killed out—that is, thrown back into further rebirths in this bloodless but unceasing warfare—by the unsuitability of the environment which supplies him not with the requisite nourishment on which it could batten. The culmination of the process of growth is the realising on this earth the ideals of Saṭya Yuga, when religion becomes the "supreme, penetrating, controlling, decisive part of a man's life" and he lives for religion and by religion, his whole life becoming saturated with spirituality :

न जातु कामान्न भयान्न लोभाद्,
धर्मन्त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः,
नित्यो धर्मः सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये,
जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥

व्यास ।

"Acting the Law we live by without fear,
And because right is right, to follow right,
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

TENNYSON.

PART IV.

Awakening India.

A Sun but dimly seen
Here, till the mortal morning mists of Earth
Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed and race
Shall bear false witness, each of each no more,
But find their limits by that larger light,
And overstep them, moving easily
Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,
The truth of Love.

Tennyson's "Akber."

Q. 1. What work is done by these endless Societies and Samâjas, Congresses and Conferences, with which the country has been flooded in these days?

A. 1. All of these try, according to their lights, to remedy the many evils that hold our fair and holy India in their cold and deathly grip, and to raise the status of our people, so that they may again lead in the van of civilisation instead of lagging so woefully behind.

Q. 2. But is it necessary to have so many different bodies trying to lead, and would not the attempt be much surer of success if only a few bodies, really representative of that which is the best and most far-seeing in the country, did the work, instead of allowing such a dispersal and waste of energy?

A. 2. Yes, it would be much better for the country if the number of these bodies were quite small, for the remedies proposed are often diametrically opposed to each other, when not wholly reactionary and tending to lower still more the condition of poor India. But apart from this, these numerous movements are not such an unmixed evil. These higher ideals consonant with the spirit of the age, which I am trying to hold up to my countrymen, can only be established after a fierce struggle with all that is old and reactionary, and even modern but reactionary. To make this struggle possible, and to rouse people out of their inertness and apathy, and force them to think and decide, it is necessary that the scattered forces of opposition should be or-

ganised for battle, and only after the conflict has been waged to its bitter end, and all that is evil and deadly has been killed out, the fittest emerge from the fierce ordeal. Then only will the numbers of these numerous and contradictory Societies diminish, and the few that are really helpful survive to carry on the work of progress and civilisation. This struggle will be more deadly than that of the Mahâbhârata, when the whole fabric of the old Âryan civilisation was utterly destroyed. It is a struggle in which individual stands against individual, and the individual against society, one ethnic group against another, and one caste against another, and not till they have been hammered into pieces, like the ore dug out of the bowels of the earth and passed through the fiery furnace, when all dross and the encasing individuality shall have been burnt out, can this congeries of warring units be welded into one compact homogeneous nation and become the shining gold desired of every one. People who lightly think national regeneration to be a milk and water process, and to be easily achieved by

making a few speeches, are sadly mistaken. It is a process in which success is gained only after terrible upheavals fraught with incalculable pain and suffering, in which stern and pitiless school only what is true and of permanent value survives.

Our country besides is huge, and it would be difficult for a central body to reach all its corners; then the conditions too are somewhat different in the different parts, hence the necessity for local applications of remedies. We have to remember, however, that while the local remedies, administered by diverse hands may be necessary, they must all be guided by one central principle —*viz.* that of lasting benefit to the country as a *whole*; unfortunately this has not been always kept clearly in sight by the would-be healers. They have generally failed to make an all-embracing enquiry, and have no clear and co-ordinate idea of the disease they are all trying to overcome. This failure to recognise the thread, the underlying principle, on which our national existence is strung, has naturally often resulted in the application of medicines which were neither

always wise nor helpful, even when not positively harmful. The attempts made, so far, to touch the national imagination, and thus rouse it to shake off bandages that are keeping the nation tied to the earth instead of soaring far and high according to its divine birthright, have been mostly failures. It feels not, realises not, its inherent strength, and sits moping like the falcon on its perch, and indeed even unconscious that there is a glorious sky above, in which he will roam at will, rejoicing in his strength and his swiftness, the day the fetters are knocked off and the hood removed. The different periods of our long existence look like the scattered beads of a broken rosary unconnected with each other. Only when the *proper* thread is forthcoming by the perception of the underlying *unity* of the whole, will become clear the purpose, the goal, towards which we ought to be speeding. When this basic idea of our existence as a separate Nation is understood, the clue for the proper remedies will be found, and we shall live to fulfil our destiny.

Q. 3. What then is this basic idea of

our existence as a nation apart?

A. 3. Our great ancestors, the Ṛ i s h i s, have given us the keynote of our nationality. It is the realising for ourselves, and the diffusion in the world, of the fact of the spiritual oneness of human kind, nay, of all that is. The A v a l o k i ṭ e s h v a r a s are a shining example of it, refusing N i r v â ṇ a for Themselves till all had passed into bliss. The different periods of our existence are but the embodiments of the various attempts made to embody this ideal in our daily life, from its abstract philosophical conception. But when this splendid ideal began to penetrate the national consciousness, India had become through and through feudal in its organisation, and the idea was cramped and distorted in the attempt to make it shine through such an unpromising material. The various A v a ṭ â r a s, the Ṛ i s h i s, the great poets, and the various social and religious regenerators—all have tried according to their lights to break down this adamantine wall of narrow and selfish exclusiveness, which was hemming in the free flow of the life-giving waters in the channels of our

national thought, and trying to make it a preserve for the favored few.

Q. 4. What causes prevent this ideal from being realised in the life of the country now?

A. 4. All institutions, beliefs and customs that keep Indian from Indian—be he Hindu, Mussalman, Jain, Sikh, Christian, Parsi or animist—relics of ages when each unit that makes up the present nation had to fight for its existence, and that having been secured, continued to fight for its own supremacy, forgetful that it was only a means and not an end.

Q. 5. What ought then to be the fundamental principle of reform?

A. 5. Recognition of the fact that while different religions, different rituals, different dogmas, and different laws and customs, will always exist, yet there is always the possibility, nay the necessity, of so working as to get rid of the separative elements from all these; we must minimise differences, abolish intolerance, and thus evolve a Society in which, while there is plenty of

elbow-room for personal aspirations, even for idiosyncracies, homogeniety will prevail, and one common aim will dominate public life and national aspirations. This factor provides us with the much-needed touchstone by which to test the development and progress of India and to measure their amount. It is not education that is the touchstone, it only provides the necessary training to use it correctly. The touchstone is the unificatory aspiration and its working out in actual life; all that makes for it is the highest religion and all that works against it is of the Devil. It is a truism of pedagogics that the life of a child is an end unto itself and not wholly a means towards some other end. Similarly we have to always bear in mind that a personal being is an end unto himself, and is not to be treated merely as a means. Hence if authority, which is not an end but merely a means, wants to coerce, to pain, to limit, the burden of proof lies not upon the individual but upon the authority. So we have to be careful lest, when smashing up authority, we set it not up again in a new form, but con-

tinue to allow the utmost liberty to the individual.

Q. 6. What should be the dominant note of public life?

A. 6. India is one country; the Indian people are one nation and have a definite place in the world's future civilisation—that of being an example of the realisation of the Brotherhood of humanity in spite of the differences of caste, color, creed, or race.

Q. 7. Does the past of India justify the possibility of this claim?

A. 7. Certainly. Hindu Society, notwithstanding its glaring defects and often ludicrous inconsistencies, has been attempting all these many thousands of years to embody as its fundamental principle wide tolerance in matters of intellectual assent, and also to some extent in matters of every day social life, while insisting on a fairly well-developed standard of conduct and a feeling of religious unity. It remains only to remove the many separative elements that yet persist or have been merely engrafted, to make the old ideal live again as an

accomplished fact in our daily life. To do this we must first learn to recognise frankly and manfully the factors that keep Indian from Indian, apart and suspicious when not positively inimical, and not try to bolster up such factors with fanciful and casuistical explanations, based on ill-learnt and misapplied science and philosophy which unfortunately for the cause of truth and humanity is being very extensively done and which, alas, we are all apt to do when passions are strong and intellect thrust aside.

Q. 8. Which is the greatest of these separative elements?

A. 8. The subordination of the social life of India to the authority of ecclesiastical and social organisations disguised as Religion.

Q. 9. But are not the details of our daily life based on the Sanâṭana Ḍharma, as propounded by Rishis, which is believed to be eternal, unchanging, and uniform for all Hinḍus?

A. 9. Decidedly not. They were never uniform, different Ṛishis prescribing

different things to people in their own parts of the country. They have undergone many changes. What was proper and meritorious at one period became improper and even sinful at others, and *vice versâ.* The "laws" may be eternal, but who can confidently allege that their human interpreters, the Ṛishis have not erred? This point has been clearly and unequivocally brought out in the Mahâbhâraṭa, when Yuḍhishṭhira, in answer to the Yaksha, who had deprived his four brothers of their lives, is made to say by Vyâsa: "The teachings of the Veḍas are contradictory, as are those of the Smṛiṭis; there is not a Ṛishi whose words are pramâṇa (binding); the essence of Ḍharma (duty) is hidden in the cave" (of the human heart). And farther, have we not a most convenient way of accepting only those passages from our sacred writings which tickle our prejudices, and coolly ignoring such as we cannot, or do not care to, follow. For instance: no Âryan is ever to cross the Vinḍhya ranges; doing it, even unknowingly, brings down a heavy penance; what do we find to-day? Then

again, Brâhmaṇas are not to enter into professions and trades, much less to be sellers of salt and of liquors; are they not freely carrying on these trades, and flooding the legal profession as vakils, and entering into all sorts of services, and competing with the lowest on terms of equality? Where has gone the Brahmacharya of the olden days, and the knowledge of the Veḍas without which a Brâhmaṇa was not a Brâhmaṇa but a Pariah, a chandâla? Are such degradations duly carried out to-day and a Brâhmaṇa degraded into a regular Pariah? What did we do when the custom of Saṭi was put down, and the 'sacred' person of the Brâhmaṇa was seen swinging in the winds beneath the gallows? Does not Manu say that no Âryan is to live under a monarch who is a Mlechcha? Endless examples of such deviations from old rules are to be met with in our daily life, and as a salve to conscience the stupid fiction of an âpaḍ-ḍharma was started; which simply means the recognition of a modification of the old rules brought about under the stress of changed circums-

tances. The result of all this is that what is "sacred S a n â ṭ a n a Ḍ h a r m a" in one part of India is either unknown, or even, regarded as *sinful* in another part; while the pretence of *every* custom being ancient is kept up. For instance, the Ṭâli, as a symbol of marriage, is indispensable and most sacred in Southern India and is wholly unknown in Northern India. Flesh foods and even fish, prohibited by M a n u, while quite common among the Northern B r â h-m a ṇ a s, are looked on with loathing by the Southerns, and their use is regarded as quite sinful and the eaters thereof are regarded with contempt. One of the names for a guest in ancient India was g o g h n a, cow-killer. The offering of m a ḍ h u p a r-k a, beefsoup, was imperative in which the sacrifice of the "fatted calf" was essential. Who would dare even to dream of performing such a dreadful sacrilege in modern India? The P r a ṭ y â b ḍ i c or yearly S h r â-ḍ ḍ h a, so universal in India, and considered as the last bulwark of ceremonial Hinḍuism, is not even mentioned in the S u ṭ r a s, except in one, which is most probably a late

one. Customs have changed so much that the word Brâhmaṇa, which was once applied only to a master of manṭras and hence of Ḍevas, and later on to a knower of Brahma, is now used for men doing all sorts of menial work, even to that of being the carriers of the dead in our jails and hospitals. This is the inevitable result of making merely birth the standard, for as soon as a possession becomes hereditary it begins to degenerate. In the very nature of things it is impossible for so many millions to be *born* philosophers and leaders.

It would throw considerable light on the evolution of Hinduism from its pre-veḍic conditions down to our own times if we could find out the beginnings of even a few well-marked changes. To take for example this very question of cow-killing. What were the causes whose operations transformed the cow-eating Hindu into a cow-worshipping one it is impossible even to guess at; unless we are prepared to assert a direct contact with the Egyptians and the borrowing thence of their cow-goddess Hathor to whom they built temples in which they

installed idols of cows and worshipped them. The Hindu if he has borrowed this cult from Egypt has borrowed it in a very diluted form. He has failed to raise stately fanes with pompous rituals where images of the "cow mother" are worshipped. The case for augury, divination, omenology, astrology and such other popular superstitions seems to be slightly different. The Assyrians and Chaldeans were next door neighbours and one is tempted to believe that all these if not borrowed wholesale were at least developed so highly under their influences.

Q. 10. How do you propose to deal with this evil?

A. 10. By the dissociation of the life of the world from the leading-strings of canonical authority, masquerading as and usurping the place of, real religion. For the most hopeless barriers to Indian progress, and still more to Indian Unity, are, not only the many and conflicting sub-sects of the Hindu religion, flaunting their rigid demarcations in each other's wrathful eyes by the varieties of armorial bearings stamped on the

bodies and foreheads of their followers, but far more the great and different religious systems themselves—Islâm, Christianity, Zoroâstriânism—within the territorial limits of India under one political, but luckily secular, Government. All these religions, with their numerous subdivisions, by their over-powering insistence on subordinating the social life of the people to the dictates of corrupt and selfish ecclesiastical authorities, instead of leaving religion to be a matter of *personal* life, have succeeded all too well in paralysing the intellectual and moral powers—nay, even religious thought itself—of the people of the country. Lord George Hamilton, when Seeretary of State for India, said in his speech (delivered on October 5, 1904, and reported in the Statesman of October 23) when opening the Indian Empire Exhibition, at the Whitechapel Gallery, [redacted] "In one town in India would be met more varieties of race and religion than could be seen in the whole of Europe. This diversity of race and creed was the origin of our Empire, and the secret of its strength." No truer remarks were ever

made about the condition of things here, and this unsparing laying open of the very root of the mischief should show us where to apply the necessary remedies, if we have not eyes to see for ourselves. Another great Anglo-Indian administrator—Sir John Strachey—has some acute remarks on this point in his "India." He says:—"the existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India." While grudgingly making this admission which might almost be said to be forced out of him, he repudiates indignantly the suggestion that this state of feeling is exploited in the interests of the ruling powers. He says, "Nothing could be more opposed to the policy and universal practice of our Government in India than the old maxim of divide and rule" (p. 241). After such an emphatic declaration one is apt to exclaim "this lady doth protest too much." Knowing what human nature has been and is throughout the world and seeing the overpowering effects of self-preservation and self-interest even among the highly developed, one cannot help feeling that this overwhelming force is not altogether absent from

the close bureaucracy that rules India. The very loudness and strength of the protest produces doubts. Has the Civil Service so far given any active help in the suppression and dissipation of these inimical race and religious prejudices? Where is the wonder then if the declarations about the good intentions of the British Government are doubted by the common people, who do not read Government Gazettes and whose sole method of judging of the intentions of any authority is not by what it declares them to be but by seeing how they are translated in real life. But by this is not meant to be suggested that it would be wise to try the methods of the discredited Russian bureaucracy and force the different religions under a dominant Government into one iron mould. What is pleaded for here is that every opportunity should be utilised to its fullest by the administration for producing feelings of sympathy, homogeniety and cohesion.

It is because of this laying of stress upon every deviation from the normal and of raising of each minor form to the dignity of "the only true religion," that we have not been

able to produce the cohesion and patriotism of the Japanese, which makes them welcome death for their country as the highest honor for which they can compete. It is because of the utter stagnation of public and corporate life, produced by warring religious authorities, that we have been contentedly swallowing the contempt and ill-treatment of the world, century after century, without making a serious and persistent attempt to set our house in order. We feel supremely happy and entirely contented when the absurd gesticulations, attitudes and postures of so-called religious observances have been gone through in the soulless manner of mere formality and routine, and when the defiling touch of men of other castes and other religions, nay, even of our own kith and kin, have been avoided. So many of us smile in superior fashion at our critics and talk of their ignorance of our "splendid past," and of the beautiful truths about Ḍevas, and demons, and creation and what not propounded in our religious books! Even the latest discoveries of science, and *all that are yet to come*, are hidden in our

Purâṇas from the vulgar gaze, under allegories, forsooth! How many of us can show any real knowledge of, or can honestly work out the true and correct interpretation of these books?

Ceremonialism is the one panacea for all evils to our torpid and sluggish hearts. How this has permeated through and through our daily life almost to the exclusion of a truly religious spirit and genuine reverence is easily exemplified by citing a single instance—the daily prayers of the Hindu, which for sometime now have consisted mostly in the various torturings of the fingers and of the limbs. Contrast this with the Greek attitude. Free child of Nature that he was; he alone among all the Nations of the world succeeded in harmonising his attitude of reverence and worship with that of self-respecting independence. The Greek never grovelled in the dust in abject self-abasement before God or King. He neither bent his knee nor lay prone on the earth with many a genuflexion in the slaves mortal terror before his lord and master. He did his

homage and his worship standing face to face with the powers whether seen or unseen. No trace of fear sullied his pure worship and adoration of the Divine. The very ancient Hindu attitude was similar, though alas all too quickly submerged under the flood of superstition. The Veḍic Hindu proudly asserted his equality with Divinity —योसावादित्ये पुरुषः सोहमोम् । When such was his faith there could be no room for other feelings than those of intense love and yearning and devotion to THAT which was the same as he in his real self.

This persistent and deliberate perversity in shutting our eyes to the teachings of history, and to what true patriotism and real duty are, is heart-breaking to contemplate. It is high time that we set about seriously developing a genuine and wide-reaching brotherliness of spirit, rigorously putting aside the paltry bickerings over the loaves and fishes of office, of social and caste barriers, of religion even—when it is a divisive and not a cohesive force. For religion—when it makes not a man honest in his dealings with men of other religions;

when it produces not feelings of brotherly love to persons of other religions; when it murders historical truth in the interests of ecclesiastical selfishness; when it narrows itself down to questions of creed and dogma, of color and sex—is no religion.

Every nation that is fit to take its proper place in the comity of nations has unceasingly to stand the quadruple test of an intellectual, social, religious and political reconstruction. India is frightfully ignorant and ill-educated; its social inequalities are painful to contemplate; latter-day Hinduism has come to be heavily incrusted with a mass of grovelling superstitions in which even their professors do not really believe. Ecclesiastical and political authorities, though from widely divergent motives, alike discourage a truly national education—the former discouraging even ordinary education; artificial hindrances are thrown into the way of the building up of modern industries. Even the British Courts of Justice have, by administering obsolete contradictory and illogical personal laws, all unconsciously, but effectually, have had their

share in the prevention of the growth of an enlightened and homogeneous Indian nation.

Under these circumstances it behoves us, not merely to cherish as an abstract philosophical concept the precept that religion, in the modern limited sense of the relation of the individual to his God, is no concern of the community, but is wholly a personal matter admitting of no intermediaries; but actually and determinately to bring it to bear on our daily doings. Perfect freedom of conscience, and the right to act up to its dictates, must be allowed, unfettered by any threat, spiritual or temporal, to every individual.

This utter freedom of conscience and the complete separation of social actions from the tyranny of ecclesiastical authority and the petrifying bondage of a dead past, is the only possible remedy for unifying and uplifting the widely divergent religious and ethnical groups, going under the names of castes, sub-castes, mixed castes, or no castes, within the territorial limits of modern India.

Q. 11. Will this idea of social life becoming independent of ecclesiastical authority ever become popular enough to be realised in everyday life and not dismissed as a wild chimera?

A. 11. Yes it will, but only after a hard struggle. Do we not see in the France of to-day—ever fertile in new ideas and the leader in characteristic modern material civilisation—the same idea becoming dominant; but only after what bitter struggles? Can we hope then to waken after a sleep of centuries without a struggle? And as to its being new, or a chimera, please remember that it is neither so wild nor so new as it may seem to some. If you have at all studied the sociology of the country you will have noticed that the germs of it have always been in existence amongst us and we have got only to develop them. I will give just one instance. Everyone knows that the J a i n a s, while calling themselves Hindus, and practising the caste system, do not believe in the V e ḍ a s and their ceremonials, in fact oppose them, nor do they follow out the sacramental rituals, nor observe

the rules about "impurity," nor perform S h r â ḍ ḍ h a s; yet in spite of all these radical differences the orthodoxy of Hinḍuism has not been shocked, and interdining and intermarriages freely take place.

To come to modern innovations; the very primitive surgery and the medicine of the Hinḍus have been almost entirely superseded by that imported from the West. This was as much "revealed" and "sacred" as any other portion of Hinḍuism. But the superiority of the latter, specially in surgery, was so patent that even the proverbial villager could not fail to see it, and, in spite of his obstinacy, adopt it, to the exclusion of his own time-honored and "revealed" system. This idea of social independance is bound to spread in the course of time, as people come more and more to realise under the uniform pressure of a secular central Government and the spread of education, that it is better to guide their daily lives by reason and the exigencies of time than by obedience to imaginary S h â s ṭ r i c authorities.

Q. 12. What immediate benefits will be

gained by this freedom of social life from its ecclesiastical bondage?

A. 12. The sea-voyage problem would vanish; as has vanished the old problem of the prohibition of going even to other parts of India. In one of the books a man is asked if he has lived in the Kaliṅga (Telugu) country; he at once answers back that he has never even gone there! Such was the horror excited in those days by travel even within the limits of India. Now, in defiance of the rules of Manu laying down the boundaries within which only an Aryan is to live, we find them not only in every nook and corner of the vast peninsula, but even in Afghânistân, Chinâ, Ceylon, Africâ and the far off islands of Mauritius. If the really old Hindus had been insular bigots how could this religion have penetrated thousands of years ago to the islands of Java and Batavia, whose memory even has perished from modern India, and have left behind ruins of magnificent temples to Indra and other Vedic Gods indicative of the ancient condition of things? Even orthodoxy has begun to recognise that

this prohibition against going out to foreign lands is distinctly productive of harm to the country. Whether we want to learn new methods of industrial work and organisation, or to study the arts and the sciences, or even to enter the highest service in our own country, we all know that it is not possible if we confine ourselves within the boundaries of India. To foreign and distant countries we must go if we want any of these things. And yet some of our venturesome people who had the temerity to go out have had to pay the penalty for their action by being forced to subject themselves on their return to many degrading penances on ecclesiastical grounds, when they have by good luck escaped complete ostracism. Why should not every person be free to come and go wherever he listeth? We see that no penalty is exacted from the Brâhmaṇas in the British military service who have to go out to any part of the world they may be sent to, and who do go out, and whose fathers and brothers are the family priests in other castes; where they become obstructionists, when any members of these want to travel out.

The question of "Shuḍḍhi", of the readmission back into the fold, of converts from Hinḍuism, will also vanish. Everyone who chose to come back would be welcome and not be thrust away with words of contumely and abuse. If the social life is released from the tyranny of ignorant, crafty and obstructive priests and caste-heads, people would not be forced to remain out of Hinḍu society or to join other religious folds for securing liberty of action in matters pertaining to the personal life.

It would become possible for Hinḍuism to go out into the world as a great teaching religion, preaching a philosophical life and the true meaning and purpose of creation. For then it would be possible for any one who has full sympathy with the religious teachings of Hinḍuism and believes in them to come under its influence without doing violence to his social life. The day this comes about Hinḍuism will become a world-embracing religion, like Christianity and Islâm, and look far beyond its present limited horizon for sympathy and for help, as those great religious organisations do.

The so-called "schisms" from the parent religion—that of the Buḍḍhist, of the Sikhs, of the followers of Kabir, even of Chaiṭanya, for he is regarded as quite orthodox—made no fuss over "conversions," for out of these conversions they have grown—two of Chaiṭanya's famous disciples having been Musalmans. The V e ḍ i c Hinḍus had a special procedure known as the "V r â ṭ y a s ṭ o m a," a most convenient and helpful legal fiction for this purpose, which is fully dealt with in the Ṭ â n d y a-B r â h m a ṇ a of the S â m a-Veḍa.

Q. 13. Will not this freedom from the bondage of ecclesiastical leadingstrings jeopardise our race-purity, on which we so much pride ourselves, by making it possible to legalise the many unions which, while common in the country, are supposed to be prohibited by the S h a s ṭ r a s and are not recognised by law either?

A. 13. Yes; it is certain to legalise many illegal unions, much to the benefit—material and moral—of all concerned. As to the fear of the purity of the race, I am

afraid it is too late in the day to raise up the bogey of race-purity. Please also remember that only now under the pressure of the British Government the murder of girl babies by the Kshaṭriyas as a class has been given up. For centuries they have been forced to go out of their castes to provide wives for their male children. To be called a "father-in-law" or a "brother-in-law" is an unpardonable term of abuse and the vain soul of the Kshaṭriya could not bear it. He killed his daughters and at the same time his 'race-purity.' You have yourself admitted the fact of illegal unions among men and women of different religions and different castes, and even different ethnic groups. Now surely, these numberless unions are not all barren; what becomes of the children born of such unions? Do they not merge into some caste or group somewhere, and thus help on the much-dreaded race-mixture? You ought to remember that the license allowed to both sexes in the Vedic times, somewhere about 6000 years ago—was very great. Even to-day the old mantra यन्मेमाता

प्रलुलोभ चरत्यननुव्रता । तन्मेरेतः पिता वृंक्ताम माभुरन्योऽवपद्यताम् । continues to be repeated at Shrâḍḍha offerings by Brâhmanas that "this piṇda" may reach him who is my recognised father—and not the real father. Manu cites the fact of this Manṭra being found in the Veḍa in proof of his contention that women are by their very natu re impure! The original is much too coarse for modern ears and will not bear a literal translation. The reading as found in Manu is slightly different. Meḍhâṭiṭhi explains it by saying that the liberty taken with the text of the manṭra by Manu was due to the exigencies of metre.

A few of the places where the manṭra is given are:—The Ekâgnikânda (Mysore). Âpasṭamba Manṭrapâṭha (Oxford) 2·19·5; & 2·19·1. Âpasṭamba Grihyasûṭra (Vienna) 8·21·3. Âpasṭamba Shrauṭasûṭra (Bib. Ind.) 1·9·9. Hiraṇyakeshin Grihyasûtra (Vienna) 2·10·7. Shâṅkhâyana Grihyasûṭra (Leipzig) 3 13 5. Vishṇusmṛiti (Bibl. Ind.) 23·12.

The condition of things must have been bad indeed before such a ritual libelling the moral

character of one's mother, grandmother and greatgrandmother, publicly and more than casting doubts on every birth, could have come into existence and such wide use. Were it not for this undeniable fact of race-mixture and race-absorption, a few handfuls, comparatively speaking, of conquering Âryans could not have swelled to over 200 millions, and in a very limited time too. Even the much later and often touched up laws of Manu recognise the marriages of Shûḍra women to men of higher castes; while the older practice and theory made no such distinction—any caste or no-caste man marrying any caste or no-caste women. The Vedic and Purâṇic literature preserve many stories of Âryan girls being given away to Non-Âryan chiefs, and Non-Âryan girls married to Âryans. The same process has been going on with regard to the 70 millions of Indian Musalmâns: the vast majority of these never came from Arabia or Persia, but are the sons of converts and converted women married by the Islâmic conquering hordes, and are essentially of the same Indian stock as the Hinḍu. The talk about

a 'pure race' is a pure myth. Mixed marriages are in full consonance with the theory and practice of V e ḍ i c and even P u r a ṇ i c India and we moderns should be ashamed to depart from such true practices. Do we not see to-day that a botanist or a breeder, who wishes to produce an improved flower or fruit or stock, must stop in-and-in breeding, and practise cross-fertilisation, if he intends to succeed. It is a law of nature that progress can only be through heterogeneity from homogeneity, and not from uniformity and sameness, which result only in deterioration, desease and death. Witness the prevalence of scrofulous diseases and of insanity in the Royal families of Europe to-day, due solely to this in-and-in breeding, and also the annals of criminal families, and how they tend to reproduce humanity of an ever increasing criminal type. We see that the quickest-witted races of the world are the most mixed; similar is the case in India. We need not raise up our ears and look startled when asked to boldly acknowledge the unhideable fact of mixture. Akbar revived the practice; but it was killed out

by the insane bigotry of Aurangzeb and his successors. If Akbar had been succeeded by rulers as wise and far-seeing as himself India would not have been to-day a congeries of broken and inimical units, but solid and united with no race, caste or religious barriers to check its progress and growth. However, under the training of our English masters—for which we cannot be too thankful—we are again attempting to discard these barriers, and every year examples of marriages in disregard of later restrictions are increasing. These numbers would be much larger, were it not for the artificial hindrances set up by the Anglo-Indian legislature and law-courts.

I should like to point out here that the Scoble Act, which raised the age-limit from 10 to 12, was a miserable compromise, and did not take into any account the teachings of even such universally recognised medical authorities as Shushruṭa and Vâgbhata—not to say, of western authorities. It is a very half-hearted and ill-considered measure, and wholly unworthy of the powerful and enlightened Government that rules our desti-

nies. The law laid down by Shushruṭa is explicit, that no girl under 16 is to have motherhood imposed upon her. In the face of this unmistakeable and absolute injunction it is absurd to be frightened by the cry of interested parties, or to allow Ḍharmashâsṭris any authority in matters physiological. Whoever dreams of consulting a lawyer about the fruit-bearing capacities of a tree, or the best time for sowing? This again shows how great is the danger of allowing ecclesiastical authorities to meddle with matters outside their proper sphere and knowledge, and the infinite harm they cause when allowed this power. A quotation from the Shîghra-boḍha, which is an astrological manual studied by tens of thousands of young Brâhmaṇa students generation after generation all over the country well shows the lengths to which priestcraft carries its interference under threats of hedious penalties to be imposed in hells of disgusting filthinesses, which the terrible imagination of a Dante even could not concieve. The Shloka runs—

सम्प्राप्तैकादशेवर्षे कन्याया न विवाहिता, मासे मासे

पिता भ्राता तस्याः पिबतिशोणितम्. It describes the measure that will be dealt out to the parents and the elder brothers, but which is so utterly coarse and foul that no civilised pen may put it in a living language. What wonder then that the raising of the marriage age seems to be such a hopeless task when such is the teaching dinned day and night into the ears of ignorant, helpless Indian mothers. I would recommend that this evil state of things be put an end to by passing an Act making marriage itself under fourteen for a girl and under eighteen for a boy a civil offence, and imposing a heavy fine for transgression as also some civil disabilities. The Universities too could give some help by not allowing married boys to go up for their Entrance Examination. The legislature ought also to remove two serious blots from the Scoble Act which makes the offence 'rape' even when the husband is the guilty party, and gives an outsider the same advantage of an extremely low age-limit. This is surely iniquitous. The age limit in such cases should not be less than 16. Is it not a

crime that for civil purposes, for the disposal of her property etc., the poor girl must have attained the age of eighteen; but for disposing of her body, her most precious possession, she should be allowed the liberty of doing it at *twelve*.

Q. 14. Will you allow divorces and remarriages even of those who are not widows?

A 14. The well known Ṛîshi Parâshara allows both divorces and remarriages of divorcees, and there are many Veḍic and Purânic instances of such occurences, and maṇtras asking a widowed woman to remarry. Even the Ḍharmashâsṭras have had to take note of such marriages and make rules for the inheritable capacity of not only sons born from a previous marriage, but also of sons born to persons who have never been legally married.

Not only Parâshara but a host of other Ṛîshis as well have made rules and laid down conditions under which dissolution of a marriage is justifiable and allowed, in some of these even *recommended*. Seventeen

distinct grounds allow of such dissolution. Curiously enough even such a wholly modern ground as incompatibility of temper is reckoned as a good reason for praying for dissolution of marriage! No stress, it will be noticed, is laid on 'virginity' as it is being done by some modern Hindûs. As to the general principle of 'virginity' it should be remembered that the rule is no less binding on the young Brahmachâri who wishes to marry. It cuts both ways. In fact it is simply impossible that even the majority of conditions prescribed, much less all, were ever [redacted] and it is sheer pedantry which would quote them as binding authorities. The whole subject is most ably dealt with in the late Mr. Justice Ranade's "Social and Religious Reform in India."

With such noble examples before us, can we, with our wider outlook on the world and humaner instincts, slide back and refuse to follow even the path cut out by these heroic old Hindus, if not open out wider and better paths on our own initiative? It is scarce necessary to dilate on the misery caused by the opposition to such humane, and in fact, necessary,

laws. How much avoidable criminality they are at the root of, is scarcely known, even to the Argus-eyed Police. Most Hindus know that even such sacred institutions as pilgrimages are utilised for the purposes of getting rid of the undesired fruits of sex failings of some female member of the family, either by infanticide, by abandonment of the child, or even of its mother,—however loved she might have been. Now, is not all this very dreadful, specially when it can all be put a stop to by a little change in the laws with which poor erring humanity has fettered itself and before which it has learnt to wallow in worship. God-made laws are never flouted so easily, and the heaviest penalties have to be paid for such transgressions; and we are paying them to-day in India in the shape of blighted affections and disorganised social life. Let us face facts like men and break the gyves with which we ourselves have fettered our limbs, and go our way rejoicing in the new-found freedom.

Q. 15. What other consequences would spring out of this independence of social life from ecclesiastical authority?

A. 15. Many important ones. For instance one present very absurd regulation, which causes any amount of friction and ill-will against us, is the custom of taking food in the company of, or at the hands of, certain persons only, and within prescribed limits of space and garments. It is relaxing, and will disappear entirely when it ceases to be regarded as justified by a fancied religious need. For the present practice of such minute differentiation in the matter of taking food from the hands of one person and refusing it from the hands of another is wholly unknown to the old law or practice. The absurdity of the present day practice has only to be stated to be laughed at, if it were not a matter of such serious and grave import in its consequences. If even a S h a ṅ k a r a c h â r y a happens merely to *see* the food of a S'h r î-V a i s h ṇ a v a before it has been offered to his God, it is polluted and thrown to the dogs, but after the offering the rice becomes holy, and the touch of a Pariah even does not pollute it, as may be seen any day on railway platforms in the South! Notice also the promiscuous eating

at Puri, where it is a *sin* and to be expiated by a penance if a person refuses to eat rice brought by low caste servants from the temple, jostling everybody in the streets; this rice is distributed all over India and is known as Mahâ-prasâḍa, which all castes take with great reverance! Yet again there are parts of India where a shûḍra may and does cook for the highest castes, and no one dreams of taking objection to drinking water from leather-bags even, and brought by Musalmân water-carriers too! How can a person who is reasonable believe that taking one kind of food rather than another, or from one person to the exclusion of another, or within a prescribed space or chaukâ as it is called, has anything to do with religion and will have dire consequences in the life he will have after his death? The present practice must be given up in favor of freer inter-dining, not only among the Hindus of various creeds and castes, but also with men of other than Hindu persuasions. For the difficulty of different kinds of food will cease to be operative, where men of other religions are con-

cerned. Do we not see every day that it is not a bar when persons of the same family or caste are concerned ? Flesh diet, or non-flesh diet, is generally a matter of personal choice and it never prevents father and son, brother and brother, amicably dining together one on flesh-foods, the other on vegetables. This will also give the necessary freedom *not* to dine with a person who leads an unclean and immoral life, or is suffering from foul and filthy diseases, a freedom which under the rigid rules of the caste system is denied under penalty of outcasting—dine you must with a casteman, however ugly his life and his body rotten with unnameable diseases.

Q. 16. Will not this complete break of social life from the trammels of ecclesiastical authority abolish all rituals and break up even that little sense of unity we have?

A. 16. The question is based on a misconception. We have shown over and over again that ritualism is more or less a cramping influence when made a necessary part of religion. It tends to raise a wall between those who follow the particular ritual and those

who do not. So when it is limited to its proper sphere, and not allowed to meddle with social life, the sense of unity will increase, will strengthen and not evaporate. Besides, ritualism is not a fixed quantity ; it is ever changing. The ritualism of the V e ḍ i c days has been completely supplanted by the S m â r ṭ a, the P u r â ṇ i k a and the T â n ṭ r i k a. Then there are individual idiosyncracies always interfering with it, no two men following it in exactly the same way. The pompous temple rituals have ceased to touch the religious needs of a large class of educated Hindus. They are used mostly as occasions for a holiday and fun-making now. The ceremonial impurity connected with child-birth is coming more and more to be recognised as the source of most of the mischief connected with the especial diseases of women, and as the cause of nearly half the deaths in child-birth. Ritualism has to answer for a great deal of avoidable human—and even animal—suffering and misery. It is this which makes possible the existence of priests of every caste and no caste even, though the B r â h m a ṇ a element preponderates

tremendously, leading most disreputable lives when not actually criminal ones, with neither learning nor morals, making the task of patriots all but impossible by their greed and cunning and the hold they have over the ignorant masses and especially the women of India. It is because of a perception of the danger to their vested interests that orthodoxy is also so deadly opposed to the education of girls.

But after all is said and done, there is no fear that all ritualism will ever completely disappear, leaving life utterly barren and inartistic as some timorous people imagine. It meets a deep-seated want of the emotional man, and as long as humanity exists, ritualism will exist. In fact the proper thing to do now is to take advantage of this need of human nature, and devise such beautiful rituals, and games (like the newly started Olympic games for all Christendom,) which will act as a cohesive and unifying force for all the various ethnic and religious groups of India.

This brings me to the pressing need of a

thorough revision of our calendar, pañchânga, and of the various works on Kâla, i. e. works treating of the proper time for the observance of various fasts and festivals. The former is hopelessly out in its calculations of such occurrences as even the eclipses, unless the prediction happens to be based on a surreptitious use of the Nautical Almanac. This use was made imperative by the imminent danger of the whole system of astrology being thrown overboard for glaring mistakes, and of the astrologers thereby losing their hold on their chief bread-supplier, the ignorant villager. For even he was beginning to ask awkward questions of his jyotiṣhi— the almanac maker. If his eclipse predictions were out by hours and hours, could he be trusted in matters beyond human ken? Then again the calculation of the seasons seems also wrong by about three weeks. Again there is the awkward interpolation of an intercalary month every three years. The Sâyana calculation, which is know to the Hindus, would set all these difficulties at rest and rectify the mistakes. But it is kept purposely in the background, for it affords

no help in bolstering up astrology and Yuga periods. The N i r a y a n a, taking no notice of the precession of equinoxes, and hence unable to correct the calendar mistakes, is in full possession of the field beause it is useful for astrological jugglings. This reform of the calendar ought to appeal equally strongly to the Musalmân for he is losing ten days every year and all his chronology is getting more and more wrong every-day, and out of correlation with that of the rest of the world. He ought to have a still stronger motive, for the fast of Ramazan would then be a fixed instead of a moving one, causing endless suffering and misery when falling in the hot summer months.

Coming to works on K'â l a we are faced with a curious difficulty, which would be really ludicrous if its consequences were not so grave. The difficulty is that there is no generally recognised binding arrangement which would make all Hinḍus observe the same fast or festival at one and the same time. For instance the K ṛ i s h ṇ a-J a n m â s h t a m i occurs on three or four days, and these not consecutive either; some of these days coming a

month after the others. The same is the case with the Shivarâṭṛi. The Ekâḍashi is the object of a fortnightly divergence, and so on endlessly. Surely Shrî Kṛishṇa could not have been born on four days occuring in different months! The trouble caused in reckoning by the gain of a ṭiṭhi to be rectified by the loss of another would also be set right.

As the Veḍic Ṛishis knew of this disturbing effect of the precession of the equinoxes on the heavenly bodies and consequently on the calendar, they continued to shift the equinoctial point, *i. e.*, the 1st point of Aries. This term has now only a technical significance in English, being made to mean always the actual first point. The point has shifted to Pisces since the day when the first observation was made fixing it at Aries, which was Mṛigashiras when first observed, from constellation to constellation up to Ashvinî; since then no corrections have been made, and the almanacs have been getting more and more inaccurate each year. The only method available now for rectifying the error is by copying the Nau-

tical Almanac, till the country produces the requisite mathematical knowledge and the necessary books, as also the organisation necessary to keep them correct.

Q. 17. Will not this freedom from the coercion of ecclesiastical authority interfere with our present name terminations, such as Bannerjee, Basu, Ḍâs, Iyer, Achâri, Singha, Pillai, Naidu, Sharmâ, Varma, etc., and with various forms of address and greetings?

A. 17. Yes, it will, and usefully too. I would advocate the giving up of these name terminations. It would be far better to continue the old practice, which still prevails in middle India, of giving names which denote individuals and not class, or caste, or status. We see to what absurd length the later way has been carried by the Parsis, who took it over from the "Chitnavis" and "Bhuskate" of the latter day Mahârâṣhtra practice and have produced such enormities as Ḍârûwâlâ (Liquorman) and many such others. It may possibly be new information to the reforming ladies in America and else-

where, who object to have their names disappear after marriage, that women in India always keep their maiden name, except perhaps among a very small section of the people. Those who dwell in Kamaun and Garhwâl are given the names of their husbands with "mañjari," or "sundari," tacked on to them, while among the Maiṭhilas of Behar the name of the husband with the termination of "priyâ," "laṭâ" or "îshvarî," is given them. Yet again the Kashmiris take a piece of the husbands name to which "râni" is added and it becomes the name of the wife. These are the only three communities who apparently change the maiden name after marriage. It is not quite certain if this change of name is anything more than a convenient way of avoiding the taking of the woman's name and refering her or calling her in a more euphonious way than that of Upper India where the usual practice is to call a woman either as "so and so's wife" or "so and so's mother." How the custom arose no body has yet explained. Coming back to the question of the proper form of address, we see in

vogue, "Bâbu," "Lâlâ," "Munshi," "Paṇdit," "Saheb," "Jî," "Avergal," "Garu," and even monstrosities like "Râ-Râ," "M. R. Ry." "Brahmashri" and many others. They might all be well merged into a simple "Mr." in English, or a "Shri" in the vernaculars.

The question of greeting is a thorny one for the Hindu in his own community. Outside it he has solved it by either adopting the Islâmic salâm or the Christian handshake—this latter though rare, is an olden Hindu practice too, be it remembered. Among themselves, as a rule the Brâhmaṇa waits to be saluted in various humble forms, and then acknowledges the salute, sometimes not even that. For instance the Namburies as a class never acknowledge a salute. All this in the present state of the country, naturally, and quite rightly, leads to a good deal of friction and ill-feeling; it could only be avoided if there were only one common form of salute for every one—be he Brâhmaṇa or Pañchama, Musalmân or Parsi. The single-right-hand-lift of the salâm seems to be a convenient form and has great vogue.

Theosophy has restarted the joining of the palms, but it is not likely to become common because of its strong ecclesiastical associations, and the opposition of the vast numbers of Brâhmaṇas who will not join palms to any but a Brâhmaṇa.

Q. 18. What do you say to the putting on of sectarian marks on the forehead, or on the body and of having a full head of hair, or shaving it; of having a Shikhâ, or of shaving the whole body?

A. 18. The former was started by individual religious teachers for the purpose of marking off their followers publicly and prominently, and even permanently, by branding them, as if they were cattle, with symbols of the mace, the conch, the bow and arrow sometimes even repeatedly, as among the Maḍhvas. These certainly cannot be said by any stretch of imagination to have any real religious basis. In fact it is nothing but brutal savagery affixing the redhot seal of ownership on live property. With regard to the Shikhâ, corresponding to the queue, the Chinese "pig-tail," it is difficult to say what

started the practice. Possibly it may be the same thing as the Manchu rulers of China brought from their distant Manchurian home, and imposed on the conquered Chinese as a badge of their domination or it may have arisen in the hot plains of India itself, when it became uncomfortable to have a full head of hair, a difficulty not felt in the colder regions from which they came. Even now B r a h- m a c h â r i s, K a u l a s, and others who have taken spécial vows, grow their hair and keep no S h i k h â. The followers of the R i g - v e ḍ a are enjoined to have five such patches of hair, but I have yet to meet a Ṛ i g v e ḍ i n who has this wonderful arrangement. Evidently the ridicule of the world was stronger than the religious precept! The followers of the K ṛ i s h ṇ a Y a j u ḥ have whittled it down to one patch only; keeping up the older tradition by touching the remaining four parts and repeating the m a n ṭ r a s. It could not well be otherwise, for in Ṭ â - m i l India, where without doubt there is a very large following of the K ṛ î s h ṇ a Y a j u ḥ it had been the custom, long before the arrival of the Âryan settlers,

to send adrift malefactors with five patches of hair on their heads. The Sâmavedis have gone a step farther and they shave the whole head, without having a Shikhâ during student life. The Malyâlî has it quite in front, just over the forehead. Attempts are made from time to time especially by Theosophists under the guise of poor science to attach a religious and occult significance to this patch of hair and to connect it with the Brahmarandhra of the yogis and the Cartesian pineal gland—the supposed seat of the human soul. Now if it were so then the wide divergence in the placing of this patch of hair or even with altogether dispensing with it would not have occured. The Roman catholic priests who are also said to preserve bits of occult lore shave the precise spot where in the majority of cases the Hindu tuft is! Then kind Nature herself renders that very spot bald before any others! One may well want to know why the poor Hindu widows, young and old, are deprived of the use of such a talisman of great virtue. Why was not the practice started of having a tuft of hair

somewhere on their head when being shaved? The appanage would without doubt have looked very artistic! The defence of this by invoking the help of so-called Western science would be laughable were it not so very common and so very pitiable. One is inclined to regard this custom as of a late growth and of course of no religious significance whatever. How it arose it is impossible to say for want of real knowledge on the point.

With regard to shaving, as against cropping it ought to be borne in mind that the invention of the razor was comparatively early. It is said in some Hindu books that it was invented by Saraswaṭî, for shaving her husband Brahmâ's long, white beard. It was made of copper, and even now for ceremonial tonsure the razor has to be of copper; but as that is out of the question, hardening copper being one of the forgotten arts, the razor has a bit of copper tied to it, or is sometimes merely touched with it before starting the operation. Scissors, being a much more complicated device, came latter on the stage, and so

could not displace the earlier razor which had taken on a religious character by that time. Even yet the practice persists and Maiṭhilas, Ṭâmils, and Mahârâshtras, shave their heads, and do not simply crop the hair in every day life. The Ṭâmils ordinarily shave the whole of their body also, a practice enjoined on all Hindus when visiting Tirthas—even to shaving off the eyebrows. For, for each hair that falls in the sacred place so many years of enjoyment and bliss will the person have in Svarga! Rather a one-sided arrangement, as no woman can ever be so hairy as a man.

Other relics of pseudo-religion are such practices as those of boring holes in the nose and ears, and inserting enormous and numberless rings in them; of wearing silk garments when dining as a sign of holiness, while among the Shrî Vaishṇavas it is regarded as unholy to use it for such purposes; and of tattooing the face and the different parts of the body. The belief about these tattoo marks is that without them no woman would be able to go to heaven, for it is only by these that a husband will be able

to recognise his wife and take her along with him to heaven!

The dread of such natural events as the eclipse, or of pathological conditions as smallpox, leading to wasteful, ridiculous and brutal, sometimes even criminal, practices, such as those of feeding overfed Brâhmaṇas, of swallowing filthy decoctions of cowdung and urine, worshipping donkeys, sacrificing goats and buffaloes and even offering up human victims before the various forms of Kâli, all of these and many more such degrading and ridiculous practices only a rational education can wipe out.

Q. 19. Do you not think that this release of social life from what you call its theological thraldom will prove disastrous to the sacramental nature of our marriage laws?

A. 19. Why should it prove disastrous? We see everywhere in the world that where marriage has been made civil most people still resort to some sort of religious ceremony. Making it civil does not interfere with religion, nor does it ever diminish the religious feelings of a man who takes advantage of the Act. It is not urged that the performing

of religious rites be penalised. The proposal is much more reasonable. The Government has already passed a Civil Marriage Act, but unfortunately there is one section in it which makes it incumbent on any persons wishing to be married under the Act to declare that they belong to no religious persuasion. This is senseless and it should be repealed. Why should persons who are religious, and do belong to some persuasion, be forced to deny their religion and utter a lie, if they wish to take advantage of the Act for social reasons? Morality is not thereby increased, but hindered. Men whose conscience is developed above that of their average fellow-beings, and who are thoughtful and withal men of grit and backbone and unwilling to submit weakly to the time-honored priestly tyranny, should not be asked, indeed forced, to submit to this indignity. Because of this, few marriages under the Act have been celebrated, for the persons who are advanced enough to take advantage of it are also advanced enough to prefer to suffer than to deliberately lie. Before I go on to deal with the real nature of the Hindu ceremonies of

marriage, I should like to point out also that registration of all marriages should be made compulsory. This would prevent many cases of injustice and misery which the present state of the law is unable to remedy. It becomes very difficult if not impossible to prove in the Courts, whether Civil or Criminal, that a marriage has taken place, especially amongst the lower classes, and amongst Musalmans also, and miscarriages of justice are the consequence; the presiding officer feels helpless before the stringent regulations of the Evidence Act.

Now to come to the question of the sacramental character of the marriage. Was it a sacrament in the old Vedic days? I very much doubt it. It is no proof that the Sûṭras, which are admittedly very much later, reckon it among the Samskâras. The best way, and the one likely to be convincing, is to analyse the nature of the marriage ceremonial itself, apart from what the later writers have said about it. Where historical considerations have to be taken into account, it is more than unsafe to trust to persons who have vested interests, and,

further, are under the spell of a philosophy which, under the influence of a growing devitalisation and degeneration, has been misinterpreted as teaching that the world is all M â y â, mere name and form, so that all exertion should be avoided except that of living at other's expense. People bred under such influences cannot be expected to be very accurate in their dealings with facts.

Students of Roman law know that Contract was of four kinds and the earliest of these was what is known as *verbal.* We make bold to say that this was exactly the nature of Hinḍu marriages in the earliest days. There was a V â g-ḍ â n a first, *i. e.* a verbal agreement. Then there was a series of questions and answers, exchanged by the husband-to-be with the woman that was to be the wife. They are what the Roman lawyer would call Promisor and Promisee. Then it took place in the presence of witnesses, human in the shape of relatives and of learned B r â h m a ṇ a s, and super-human as A g n i and other Ḍ e v a s and the Sun, or the Pole-star if the marriage took place in the night. The marriage was not

complete till co-habitation had taken place. This was later reduced to the completion of the S a p t a p a ḍ î, the seven circumambulations round the fire beside the marriage pole. This marriage pole is essential in Northern but unknown in Southern India. Such a radical change in the law was forced on it by the evil custom, that had been growing up in the interval, of marrying girls when quite young. This again had probably its rise in the sweeping away of the old V e ḍ i c liberty which the girls enjoyed of leading an unmarried life. How manifold and far reaching have been the evil consequences of this seemingly trivial change in the old law is witnessed to by the census figures which show that there are thousands of widows who are not even one year old! If the old V e ḍ i c law were reinforced and no marriages to be recognised unless consummated how much avoidable crime and misery would be saved.

You will see that much of what we are apt to regard as religious ceremonial was probably nothing of the kind, but simply the only way then known to clinch a

contract and make it binding. The very tediousness of the procedure—formal question after formal question and equally formal answer after formal answer and then the final summing up, and the seven circum-ambulations of both, with breaks between when the woman stands on a stone roller while mantras are being repeated—all this shows that either party was free to withdraw from the contract at any point and full time was allowed him or her to do so till the very last moment *i. e.* the moment when they had begun to live together actually as husband and wife. We know from the old books that it was not necessary for every girl to be married; and many elected to remain free. The Ṛigveḍa shows that all the daughters who remained in their father's house and did not marry, received their share of his property along with their brothers; they were not deprived of their inheritance and compelled to marry as in the degenerate latter day Smṛiṭis. We all know that nowhere, at the dawn of civilisation, had the concept of law, as we have it now, any existence. It was inextri-

cably mixed up with ceremonials, which came to be looked upon as religious, and it was a deadly sacrilege to meddle with them. We see this very thing to-day in every savage society that exists. Hindu law never succeeded in emancipating itself wholly from the deadly clutches of the priest is witnessed to by every single book, down to our own times. Civil, canonical, criminal rules are all mixed up in inextricable confusion with social practices and penalties. Every little portion of it being only fully ascertainable by reference to the whole surroundings. Gradually however as Hindu law tried, though unsuccessfully, to emancipate itself from its religio-ceremonial entanglements it attempted to take away many acts and performances from under the ægis of theology and put them under its own protecting wings. But unfortunately and in this particular specially, it fought a steadily losing battle, and the position of woman went from bad to worse, as the ascetic view of life gained more and more the upper hand; till, finally all her liberty and her rights were filched away from her and she

was put down in the sacred books of the Hindus as the archfiend, to whom all the evils from which majestic man suffered were due!

It was probably a perception of this fact by the Rishi Parâshara, stimulated possibly by the loose living of his age and his own *liaison* with a fisherman's daughter named Satyavatî who after giving birth to Veda Vyâsa as the result of this irregular proceeding later became through a regular marriage with a Kshtriya king the great-grand-mother of the Kauravas and the Pândavas, which made him restore to woman her freedom in his Smriti. This work is said to be the binding law-book for Hindus in these days, and one constantly hears from the lips of the Pandits: "Kalau-pârâsharâsmrtâh." Alas! that it should be only on their lips and not in their hearts!

Q. 20. Will not the application of your general principle modify our law of Inheritance?

A. 20. Yes, it will, and much to its improvement. The Hindu legists of a later

day, untouched by the practical necessities of the work-a-day world, have, with their doctrinaire interpretations, succeeded in creating such widely divergent rules of inheritance as those of Jîmûtavâhana and Vijñâneshvara, all based on the same old texts! If the natural feelings had been consulted, pedantry would have had no sway and many an inequitable rule would never have come into existence. Instead of half a dozen differing lists of inheritors, we should have had one common list based upon common-sense, equity and the well recognised course of natural affections.

It may not be wholly out of place to point out here the real nature of the major portion of the extant Samskṛiṭa literature. It belongs to the period when the growth of the indigenous Hinḍu civilisation had been checked, and its decay had set in with the the influx of foreign invaders. This decay was largely due to the enormous mass of alien elements with which it came into contact in its onward march. This, while it was absorbed, was never perfectly assimilated and it was always jarring with the old

well-ordered polity and producing a chaotic condition of things. The literature produced among such surroundings was bound to be introspective and unpractical in its nature and hence largely unsocial in its character and results. If the fact, that the books which guide our daily life are comparatively quite modern and diverge from the really ancient doctrine and practice, and even do not agree among themselves, were more widely recognised and accorded its due weight, the path of the reformer would become much smoother.

Q. 21. What about the rules regarding adoption?

A. 21. This branch of the Hinḍu Civil law has suffered equally badly because of its connection with the Hinḍu ecclesiastical law. Here again wide divergences are to be met with. Thus under the Miṭhilâ law, by merely taking hold of a person's hand and by pronouncing certain words the adoption becomes complete; the relationship or the age of the adopter being of no consequence. Whereas in adoptions under the Ḍaṭṭaka-Mîmânsâ, the most absurd and stringent

regulations are laid down and blindly enforced by the British Courts of Justice, which will not deviate a heir's breadth from the law which they have accepted as correct, relying on stray translations which are seldom accurate. No proper enquiry has ever been made as to the annoyance it causes to the folk over whom it is worked and whether they recognise it as binding on themselves or not. When the right of a Hindu to execute a will is recognised, where is the utility of trying to bolster up antiquated laws, which, persons supposed to be guided by them, never fully belived in or practiced? A will can play havoc with the laws of inheritance and of adoption. Why then be bound by the old law which causes so much injustice to the relatives, descendents, and friends of those Hindus only who by mischance die intestate? It would be a much appreciated boon if the medieval restrictions were not enforced by the courts, and a simple system of publication and registration made compulsory.

Q. 22. What about the joint-family system?

A. 22. In actual everyday life it is now far more of a fiction than a fact, and, in the attenuated form in which it exists, it leads to endless friction and waste of property.. To give only one instance, if a coparcener changes his religion and remains in the family house and insists on entering the temple-room there is no legal method of preventing him from doing so. It diminishes the earning powers of the family by throwing the burden of looking after the welfare of every unit composing it, irrespective of his capacity for self-help, on one member of it and thus offering a premium to indolence and all its undesirable consequences. For ecclesiastical reasons, the trend of Hindu law is also against it, for the more the divisions the greater the number of Piṇḍas. A slight attempt to remedy this evil was made in Madras, and a bill known as the Hindu Gains of Learning Bill was introduced in the local council by Sir Bhashyam Iyengar, the foremost lawyer of the Province, and also noted for his orthodoxy, but it met with scant courtesy at the hands of the Government and was vetoed. A similar fate over-

took the Bill to regulate the law of Religious Endowments, and we have to sit helpless and mourn the frightful waste and misuse of crores of rupees all over India at the hands of the guardians of our temples. A Hindî epigram hits off the situation neatly:—"Guardians? No. Devourers!"

The best way of putting a stop to all such evils would be the codification of the "personal" law and its severance as far as practicable from its canonical entanglements as has been done in most European countries, notably France, Germany and Italy. The population of each of these countries is as religious as that of any other; but this has not prevented their being given a *complete* body of civil and commercial law which while free from theological trammels does not interfere with the practice of Religion. So it will be here. Has our religion suffered because the British Government has enacted a Penal Code which takes no account of caste or social practice; or because the Jail arrangements are the same for every prisoner be he a Brâhmaṇa or a Pariah? When once

codified, in however tentative and imperfect a shape the way to make it more and more rational and in consonance with the rapidly growing needs of the country will be clear. All such vexed questions as those of divorce, of the maintenance for illegitimate children and their mothers, of the rights of inheritance of widows, of the children of married widows from previous marriages, of the law of property of married and unmarried women, the law of pre-emption, the law to legalise a legacy to a person then unborn, and many more such would all be settled and set at rest.

The British Government has, unwittingly brought us to this pass of helplessness in the belief that a foreign Government ought not to meddle with the people's domestic arrangements. This belief would have been justified if we had the power of legislating for ourselves and thus re-adjusting our affairs from time to time as the necessity arose, but before the solid array of overwhelming official majorities influenced by the belief above mentioned, what can a few stray Indians, however capable and earnest, and

however well backed by their countrymen, do? Besides, is this plea really quite honestly put forward? I am not quite sure. When the British Government did not hesitate to abolish the time-honored exemption of Brâhmaṇas from liability to capital punishment, and the even more greatly honored custom of Saṭi, when it was not afraid to prevent the heartless and cruel wrong perpetrated on married young girls and many more such when it either suited its convenience or the pressure from England was overwhelming, why should it when conditions are more favorable for the introducton of reforms, hang back and urge weak pleas for not moving and thus hinder progress and development?

Q. 23. Under such changed conditions of the civil law what standing would belong to celibate religious orders and to such individuals as have entered the fourth Âshrama, but without definitely enrolling themselves in one of those orders?

A. 23. Neither the spirit nor the letter of the Hiṇḍu law allows religieuses to hold

property, nor permits them to sue or be sued in the Civil courts as a natural consequence. I do not see what better we can do than adhere to this very thoughtful and far-seeing arrangement. To allow such individuals or corporations a standing under the civil law would defeat the very object of their existence, which is the freedom from worldly entanglements that gives free scope to develop the spiritual side of life. No temptations ought to be put in their way to help them slide back from their high and other-worldly aspirations, when they have once formally renounced the world and all it stands for. It becomes the duty of every government to help them by declaring them "dead" for all civil purposes. If this were done, which is in full accord with the rules of the Smṛiṭis, it would make this fourth Âshrama a reality and a source of great moral power instead of being largely a nuisance as it is at present. This vast beggar, but *not pauper*, population is a parasite which is not satiated by the mere eating up of the wealth of the country, but takes a wanton delight in destroying its intellect and even its morals. It

makes no return for the lavish support and the slavish adoration it exacts, but is a pest ever growing larger and more mischievous at the cost of the life of the country it feeds upon. Take away this all-powerful inducement of getting wealthy and their numbers and their immense power for doing mischief would dwindle away quite rapidly. A good many criminals wanted by the police hide among these orders, which are only too often centres of vice, and even of felony, as every one who has to deal with them knows full well. A second measure, which again is in full consonance with the Ḍharmashâsṭra, is to prevent minors, *i. e.* boys under 18, from being made "disciples," by making it an offence punishable under the Penal Code. Evasion of this could easily be prevented by making registration compulsory as in adoption cases; this being nothing else than a "religious" adoption. But if the Government hesitates to move in the matter along such lines, it might create titles and honors, as it has done in the case of Panḍits and Maulvies, to be bestowed on really worthy leaders of Religious Orders and by thus

appealing to the comparatively low, but more active, motives which govern human actions all the world over, bring them under control, and induce them to lead at least decent lives and not be a standing problem in ethics to all truly religious and god-fearing men, by the mode of their lives lived in a whole-hearted defiance of all the canons of even a work-a-day morality.

Q. 24. Would you recommend such religieuses as find after entering the fourth stage that it does not suit them, to re-enter the ordinary married life of the world?

A. 24. Most certainly yes. It is but proper that the weakness of human nature be frankly recognised and allowance made for it by leaving open a door for the rectification of such mistakes. It is largely because of the unalterable nature of this act of renunciation among Hindus in these days that so many abominations have crept in. Buḍḍhism, recognising the fact of human weakness, allowed not only perfect freedom to go back to a worldly life, but even advised disciples who showed any vacilla-

tion to do so. No shame attaches to the person who elects thus to go back to the householder's life, he is even praised for his straightforwardness in thus returning in good time, instead of staying on and bringing discredit on the order. In fact to-day, in Burma, the majority of Buḍḍhists go through a period of the monk's or nun's life before entering the householder's order, and because of this the percentage of illiterate men and women is exceedingly low there, and the women enjoy even greater freedom than their English sisters do. (vide Fielding Hall's "The soul of a people" a most informing book for every Hindu.)

Govidarâja, who is only next in importance to Meḍhâṭiṭhi as a commentator on Manu, distinctly interprets Sh. III. 50 as allowing a person in the fourth Âshrama to go back to the householder's life to beget children.

Q. 25. What do you say to the law of the restitution of conjugal rights?

A. 25. It is an odious law productive of fearful suffering, when not of death by

murder or suicide. The country was innocent of it till it was introduced by the English in 1882 when the Criminal Procedure Code was being revised and against the protests of a large number of the members of the Council. The sooner it is repealed the better for every one. Attempts are sometimes made to defend this iniquitous law, which degrades the whole womanhood of the Nation, by people whom we can only charitably suppose that they know not what they are talking under the surpassingly wonderful plea that but for this law of 1882 foisted on the country by foreigners, a premium would be put on shallow fickleness in the appreciation of the marriage bond! I confess to standing aghast before the sweet reasonableness of this powerful argument. But do the people who advance such arguments ever stop to consider as to what was the state of appreciation of the marriage bond in the country before the year 1882 when this one-sided and immoral law was promulgated? I suppose the advocates of the measure would unblushingly avow that the moral

behaviour of the women before that glorious date was not worth a scrap! I would finally remind all these people that while it crushes down the already overburdened woman, the man is free to go on pursuing his wrong course untrammelled by any fear of law. Not till polygamy, concubinage, and the marrying of girls to men old enough to be their grand-fathers is made penal may the advocates of the Restitution of Conjugal Rights have the face to plead for such a measure. An act like this is a standing disgrace to civilisation and to what I am ashamed to have to call the manhood of the Nation that enforces such Specific Relief in the barter of the human body.

Q. 26. Before we go further I should like to have your opinion on the perplexing variety of dresses in the country, and the ways of putting them on, for they, too, seem to have got some religious character?

A. 26. You see here how religion is brought into disrepute by being made a handmaiden to matters of even such wholly social convention as dress. A Musalman has

his shirt opening on the left side, a Hinḍu on the right, a Musalman's trousers must not go below the ankles, a Pârsi lady must have her head rolled up in a bit of white cloth, a Deccani lady, whether Tâmil, Telegu or Marâthâ, must have her sâri tucked up between her legs, a Malabar woman is to go stark naked above the waist, while a Punjâbî delights in a pair of tight trousers and a shirt. To my mind the most becoming head dress for a man is a colored and artistically rolled up sâfâ as used in the Punjâb. The present great diversity in head dresses, for instance, ranging as it does from the bare head of the Bengâli and the feather-weight cap of the Hinḍustânî to the sloping-roof black hat of the Pârsî, a copy of the old discarded Gujrâṭî turban by the way, and the heavy cart-wheel red turban of Mahârâshtra is to a large extent a separative force. It helps to mark off the wearers as belonging to different and alien races. What I wish to advocate is some kind of similarity in the style of dress; a sort of national dress, which while being uniform in its larger aspect allows room for individual taste and the ne-

cessary diversity in minor points. Prizes might well be awarded for such a purpose and artists asked to devise beautiful and becoming dresses without marring their utility For outdoor work I would advocate the use of sunhats—I must confess they are not pretty but are exceedingly useful and the prejudice against their use is most unreasonable. Field-laborers both in eastern and western India use a large umbrella-like structure made of leaves, which is a splendid protection against both sun and rain. It should be made more widely known, and when it gets adopted by the rest of the laboring population of the country it will make greatly for their comfort and happiness, saving them from sunstrokes and wettings resulting in chills and fevers; thus preventing much avoidable poverty and misery, brought on by long periods of sickness and even death, due to exposure acting on a well-nigh starved body. With regard to the rest of the dress, it is gradually changing—no man now wears, outside of Râjpuṭânâ, a woman's skirt, the j â m â and people are taking on more and more to the

English style. This in some modified shape will in time displace all the different old ways. The real difficulty about dress becomes prominent when the attire of the woman is in question. The Pârsî and Brâhmo ladies appear to dress with taste and elegance unless too much westernised and perverted into using stiff corsets and high-heeled shoes. The Iyengar women also dress very prettily, and the harmonious and artistic blending of many colors in their sârîs is very graceful and charming. But they have to learn to wear some larger piece of dress over their tiny corslets.

The question of a proper dress for woman assumes a very large importance when they belong to classes practicing the zenânâ system. As long as she hides within the bosom of the family, it is a matter of comparative unimportance what her dress is; but if she is to step out of the charmed circle and mix in the world and take her proper position in society, decent, well-fitting and artistic dress becomes a necessity. Neither the diaphanous sârîs of Bengal nor the enormous petticoats of Râjputânâ, nor yet

again the tight trousers and shirt of Musalmân India, are commendable. They have all to give way to something which, while not impeding free movement, will add dignity and grace to the wearer.

Q. 27. I see you contemplate the breaking down of the Zenânâ system, but do you not think that this innovation will interfere with the welfare and peace of many a house hold?

A. 27. I certainly do expect to see the Zenânâ system knocked on the head, and soon too. How can you say that by giving it up the welfare and peace of many a household will be disturbed? In no case where there is not already a state of tension will any such untoward event happen. Are the women of those Hinḍû races—you will please notice that I confine myself only to the Hinḍûs and do not take into account the practice of the Christian and Buḍḍhist nations—who do not observe it, whether of high degree and caste or low, in any way inferior to those who do? Are they gad-abouts and inattentive to the welfare and comfort of their families, are they more

self-willed, and less moral, or less lady-like, or coarser than the women within the sacred precincts of the p a r ḍ â? And, then, what is this much vaunted p a r ḍ â and its extent and rigidity? Even the much abused Musalmân who is held primarily responsible, though unjustly, for this great evil of Upper India, does not wholly lock up his women-kind. Do not the Hinḍû p a r ḍ â ladies go out freely to temples and even to bathe in public in the sacred tanks and rivers? Do they not appear before their family priests who are no whit better, when not actually lower, than average humanity? In short it is an institution of a very variable quantity and does no good whatsoever. Can a system which shuts up the mothers of the race behind stone walls in darkness and seclusion avoid reacting disastrously on the manliness and civilisation of the race? It is mere blind and unreasoning prejudice which would try to preserve this institution, all too blissful in its ignorance of the tremendous injury it is doing to the future of the nation. The men have to be educated out of it quite as much as the women, for more often it is the

vanity of the former which would shut the latter up, even where they have been in the enjoyment of freedom previously. There is also a very large amount of male jealousy and distrust of the woman behind it. Does not Manu say that one is not to sit alone with his own mother, and sister and daughter? What could be lower than this estimate of human nature? It reminds one of the savage jungle tribes of parts of the country where cow-like the mother bears children to her own son. Surely such could not have been the normal condition of Ancient India. Abnormalities ten thousand M a n u s cannot guard against; and to base a rule on such would be the height of criminal folly in a human legislator. But I suppose a Divine Legislator is above such paltry and merely human considerations! Let us thrust this blight away from amongst us as quickly as possible and let the light of liberty and freedom penetrate its farthest and darkest recesses.

A careless reader might think the above statements rather confused and exaggerated; for I have stated above that the institution

is of a very variable quantity and not quite like cellular imprisonment—though even here one may safely assert that such things are not unknown or even very rare, some of our poets have indulged in the boast that even the Sun has not seen the consorts of certain chiefs—and which unfortunately is not an untrue boast. While freely admitting the gradations of the zenana system, I would beg to point out that the injury inflicted is, if such an impalpable thing were capable of exact measurement, proportionate to the intensity and rigidity of the system. How and when it arose it is impossible to determine now. It is a false belief which would attribute it to the advent of Islâm in India. The West Coast from Sindh downwards to Malabar and the Deccan including Mysore and Madras has been one of the most war-harassed portion of the country and there the women are the least kept in hiding. Look at Kashmir and Panjab, which have been raided from the North and the West ever since history goes back, there the women have not even yet learnt not to bathe naked in public. Behar which has suffered

least is the most stringent in its observation of g o s h â. Even the mother-in-law will not appear before her Maithila son-in-law nor even the father-in-law! What I have been trying to convey to my readers here is the fact that whether the system is well-observed or ill-observed, whether it is enforced in all its rigidity or dwindles down through various grades to the comparative freedom of the Mahârâshtra or Tamil woman; sex self-consciousness and sex-difference are always present. Nowhere in India—not even among the Nayars the sex feeling has been subordinated and *full* social freedom allowed.

Q. 28 What will be the effect of such a freedom of social life from its present theological subordination on the study of the various vernaculars and of S a m s k ṛ i ṭ a?

A. 28 The effect will be an exceedingly useful one. The vernaculars will no more be treated as the Cinderella of the family, but take their rightful place as the queens of the household, instead of being the drudges they are at present. There

is no possibility of the tremendous educational problem of the country being solved satisfactorily till S a m s k ṛ i t a is dethroned from its high sacrosanct pedestal and assigned its rightful place and the vernaculars restored their inheritance of which they have been so long deprived to the grievous harm of the Nation and the country. People who dream of making S a m s k ṛ i t a the common vehicle of speech are living in a fool's paradise and like the ostrich are closing their eyes to the danger around instead of manfully opening their eyes and facing the danger. Is it probable—apart from its inherent impossibility—that the various religions within the territorial limits of India will ever take up that language so steeped in theological associations for their mother-tongue? We have to constantly remember that the future Nation will be built on very different lines than those of the old-world V e ḍ i c polity, which is as dead as the Dodo. Religious conformity will have to give way to more worldly considerations and the newer base will cease to lay stress on the worship of the same Gods for purposes of National

homogeneity. Keeping all this in mind, I will go on to say something now as to what in my opinion is the real character of the literature in this language and the kind of influence it has exercised over the character and development of the various peoples dwelling in the country and professing Hinduism. In doing this I will deal with S a m s k ṛ i ṭ a only in its literary, social and national aspects and not so much with its religious associations.

We do not easily realise how grave is the harm that is being done to India by this blind worship and longing for the language. This hankering after it fearfully clogs all our attempts at progress. The language pins us down helpess to a long dead tribal past, its customs and aspirations. Its sacerdotal genius effectually hems us round with a grim wall of endless ceremonialism and the squirrel's cage of artificial rhetoric and exegetic philosophy. No progress, no diviation from the world-old ruts is its stern unbending command: all originality must be suppressed at any cost.

No trade, no commerce, nothing that

makes life worth living in the world, but instead a deep-rooted aversion to it and all that is implied by it is its unflinching and unabashed attitude. The world is moving fast round us and even when there is no pressure from out-side, considerable friction is caused by our refusal to move down the stream of time, causing us not only to be left behind but bringing us considerable hurt as well from the elbows of our pushing neighbours; for as our luck would have it, we have not succeeded in securing the isolation even for which we sacrificed our national soul. Like the fabled Ṭrishanku of yore, we are hanging in mid-heaven, neither of this world nor of the other, the scorn and laughing stock of all. Our attempts under the guidance of some misguided folk to go back to the long dead past and revive it, may well be characterised in the words of the Upanishad—अंधेनैवनीयमानायथान्धाः — the blind guide leading the blind. The attempt is as profitable and as reasonable as would be that of one—if there was such a one—who would despise his present humanity and long

to get back to the halcyon days of his arboreal existence!

One more and very serious objection is the demoralisation caused by the popular readings and recitals of the non-ethical actions of the Gods and their approval in the Purâṇas. The verbal jugglings indulged in on the lines of the Brâhmaṇas and the Niruktạ when explaining Veḍic stories do not help to mend matters. The disastrous reaction of such teachings on civic virtues was pointed out long ago by Plato in a magnificient passage of "The Republic" where with merciless logic he has exposed the utter fallacy of the position of the advocates of Homeric teachings and the ruin wrought by them in the moral sense of the Athenian youth.

Let us then give it a fitting funeral and come to the living vernaculars. Every reformer to whom the welfare of the masses was at heart and not merely of a select few hankering after a special peace in heaven in which no other was to be allowed, has always made the spoken languages the vehicle of his teachings.

They have studiously avoided the highly complex and wholly artificial language of a narrow set. They broke through the traditional thraldom to S a m s k r i ṭ a and all that it implied. They dared to look forwards and taught the people to do the same and refused to caste a glance backwards on that which was dead and rotting. They threw themselves headlong into progressive movements and never once pined for the "glory that was no more."

For National progress and unification it would be an immense advantage to have one and only one vernacular for the whole of the country as also one script. But as this may not be practicable all at once, though Hindi is spoken by about half and understood by fully two-thirds of India, it would be useful to fix attention on a few of the most current vernaculars for the time being; making these the vehicles for national education and enlightenment. In the nature of things S a m s k r i ṭ a can never appeal profitably to any but an exceeding few. English appeals to a much wider class, but even that though a living progressive

language and the tongue of our rulers, can never displace the vernaculars for the masses. If education is to reach them it can do so only through their mother-tongue; but attempts such as were lately made by the Government in Bengal to give literary fixity to the various dialects are, however well-meaning, exceedingly reprehensible. They will only help to create more confusion; the attempt should be to minimise such differences where they exist and not to enhance them. The vernaculars however have to be released from the bondage of Samskriṭa and Arabic which the believers in "high style" and "high Hindi" and "Sâḍhubhâshâ" or "arabicised Urdu" are doing their best to impose on them. These misguided enthusiasts do not evidently recognise the elementary principle that the object of language is to *express* thought and not to *hide* it. Purism, and priggish pedantry whether Maulvi-born or Pandit-born have to be suppressed mercilessly. Farther, the mania for translating instead of adopting straight away technical words has to be awarded a similar drastic treatment. It is madness hobbling ourselves in such wise when we could

help ease and effectiveness of expression in our vernacular adaptations of European thought and Science. Such a procedure has two supreme advantages over the other. It helps to fix one technical vocabulary for the whole of the country and its various vernaculars, thus making the translator's labor easy. It also makes it easy for one who has studied the subject in his own mother-tongue to take it up in any other vernacular and even in English, with only a very elementary knowledge of the language, which would not be possible if all the terms were new to him. Taking all these factors into consideration, we arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the study of Samskriṭa should be left into the hands of the few specialists who can study it critically and have the necessary liesure to devote a whole lifetime of undivided attention to it; while every effort should be made to improve and enrich the vernaculars which are the living and only possible vehicles of the throbbing national life and thought which Samskrita is not.

Q. 29. What means do you suggest for the removal of these many shortcomings that

you have pointed out?

A. 29. Primarily education; but education in its best and truest sense; and not the education which may give you a degree, or teach you parrot-like to repeat shibboleths. An education that merely teaches the deadly gerund-grinding of Saṃskṛiṭa grammar, on which even Shankarâchârya—profound pessimist though he was—could not resist pouring his wrath and contempt, is but a farce. In a fine hymn he bursts out, "what will it profit a man when he is dying to know that the root Dukṛiya means to do." Let us "do" then, before it becomes too late; late it is already in all conscience. The education that our foreign rulers are giving us, though in all good faith, is no less fatal to our true interests than have been the old-world methods of education in Saṃskṛiṭa. This fills the fresh young life with the crude *facts* of European sciences and products of thought, in the various departments of human activity, which are but seldom assimilated or become fruitful; while the former has been for generations choking the budding life with the deadly miasma of

ritual and of ceremonialism and filling it with empty, meaningless *words* and the superb conceit born of such soul-less studies. Education to become a living factor in the life of the Nation should be so moulded as to bring out all the bright activities of a child—*rouse* his or her keen fresh perceptions, force them to observe accurately and reason logically. In short the scientific *method* has to be taught as against merely scientific *learning*. Here in India we want at least five thousand Hindus to go out to America and Germany, France and England every year, for purposes of education till the East has assimilated all that is best in the West. It is real education only and not the counterfeit which is mostly passed as such, which can open the eyes of a man and make him perceive things in their correct proportions, undisturbed by age-long prejudices; it is this that will teach him to sympathise with practices and ideals other than his own and engender the necessary tolerance and sympathy which would finally evoke love, leading to the recognition of the brotherhood of humanity and laying the firm foundation of national unity on

this impregnable basis.

This tolerance will effectually prevent any sect or community from doing anything to hurt the feelings of another. The S h î â will cease to pronounce the ṭ a b a r r â against the S u n n î. The S u n n î will not slaughter cows and defile temples with their blood. The H i n ḍ û will not retaliate by throwing pigs into mosques and blowing conches at the hours of prayer. Nay, education, when widespread and rightly conducted, will have weakened many an undesirable feeling itself, and with the passing away of these feelings, that take offence and give offence, the inducement that prompts to such irrational and even idiotic and culpable actions will vanish, producing harmony and love, where before was discord and enmity. It will rouse a feeling of proper self-respect and then only will be seen in its inner significance the meaning of such acts as would prevent an Indian from even being a hewer of wood and drawer of water in the English colonies. He will begin to see that if he wishes to be treated as a man and an equal and not to be hustled off the footpath and treated as a

coolie, he must fit himself for civic responsibility and bring the pressure of obvious and unmistakable worth to bear on the Government, which he can only do when he is selfless. The present jarring of units fritters away all power and makes it impossible for helpers and leaders to do us much good. If these are allowed to work for our redemption then discipline and organisation—without which no co-operation is possible—must replace the present chaotic state where there is plenty of ordering but no obeying. Not till we have realised that knowledge wins respect, that the highest and truest knowledge is that which brings about such a full realisation of the inner unity that it leads to an active recognition of it in the relations of every-day life, the immediate result of which is a clear recognition of Duty and the firm determination to practice it at any cost—not till then shall we be able to grow into our birth-right.

These ideals have to be preached by day and by night throughout the length and the breadth of the land, and in every vernacular that is spoken within its limits, that no soul

may be left whom the message has not reached. We should not rest till their imagination is touched and they are all fired by a one-pointed zeal to raise their beloved country to the first rank among the nations of the earth. Differences of language, of race, of custom, of religion have all to be submerged so far as they prove to be hindrances and a divisive force if we wish to see our country prosperous and respected. We must realise to the fullest the real solidarity, the oneness, underlying all this external surface difference. All artificial barriers raised for whatever purposes and by whomsoever must be cast down; *their day is over* and, trampling upon these separative forces, inherited, not from the true ancient, but the confused middle past, let us stand forth as one and inseparable under the glorious light of the rising sun of sympathy and of love.

These are not merely "counsels of perfection" and "beautiful dreams of the future" to be listened to and then forgotten. They are stern realities and we dare not neglect them. It is by the "dreams" of a

few that the world always advances, and it is for us, now that the "dream" has been dreamed and given a "name and a form" to give it "substance and materiality" and make it live once again in our beloved India. The old Hindu, in theory at least, has always been a cosmopolitan—u d â r a c h a r i t â n â n ṭ u v a s u ḍ h a i v a k u t u m b a k a m—let him be so now in practice. Let the teaching in that magnificient hymn of P u s h p a - ḍ a n ṭ a filter down to our hearts. May we realize in daily practice the splendid teaching that while the paths are many they all lead to the same goal, for by whatever paths straight or devious a river goes it ultimately reaches the ocean, and that those who try to conserve the highest of value are all children of Divinity, in spite of the differences of religious or social polity. Now is the time to gird up our loins and begin to clear away with resolute will and unhesitating hands the accumulated rubbish left behind by a past that is dead. Let us pray then that the requisite strength be granted us to tread this thorny path of national greatness and that Divine

Light be vouchsafed us to guide our faltering steps through the dense dark jungle-growth of long ages of bigotry and superstition.

निन्दन्तु नीतिनिपुणा यदि वा स्तुवन्तु
लक्ष्मीः समाविशतु गच्छतु वा यथेष्टम् ।
अद्यैव वा मरणमस्तु युगान्तरे वा
न्याय्यात् पथः प्रविचलन्ति पदं न धीराः ॥

भर्तृहरि :

"I dreamed
That stone by stone I reared a sacred fane,
A temple, nor pagoda, mosque nor church,
But loftier, simpler, always open-doored,
To every breath from heaven; And Truth and peace
And love and justice came and dwelt therein."

TENNYSON.

APPENDIX.

[TRANSLATION OF SAMSKRITA QUOTATIONS]

[Page 1]

Accept the truth well-reasoned out
 That e'en a child might say,
All else, though spoke by Brahma's self,
 As rubbish cast away.

Yoga-Vâsistha.

'Tis old! therefore it must be right,
'Tis new! it must be wrong:
So sayeth but the witless wight
By others led along;
But judging both with reason's eyes,
They ever choose who are the wise.

Kâlidâsa.

[Page 190]

In half a verse shall I make plain
 What million books may say:—
To sin is to give others pain;
 Give joy, 'tis merits' way.

Vyâsa.

[Page 265]

Not for the sake of love, or fear, or greed.
Or life itself forsake thou righteousness,
For dharma lasts when pain and pleasure pass
And self is deathless while Its motives die.

Vyâsa

[Page 363]

The men of policies may praise or blame,
Wealth come or go with honor as it please,
And life depart to-day or last for aye,
The just stray not one step from Truth's right way.

Bhartrihari.

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